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# LIFE OF HERNANDO CORTES.

# THE LIFE

OF

# HERNANDO CORTES.

BY ARTHUR HELPS,

*Author of the "Spanish Conquest in America."*



NEW YORK:
G. P. PUTNAM & SONS,
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1871.

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# DEDICATION.

My dear Carlyle,

I DEDICATE this Life of Cortes to you. And I cannot content myself by making a simple dedication, but must write a letter, which I hope you will not consider to be too long, explaining several matters which I wish to explain to you.

This Life is not a mere extract from my History of the Spanish Conquest. It is true that I have made use of that part of my history which relates to the Conquest of Mexico, because I had given many years to that subject, and did not find much that I could alter. I went carefully, however, over every sentence quoted from that History, to see whether, by the aid of additional knowledge, I could correct or improve it; and I have added

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greatly to those parts which especially concern the private life of Cortes.

I dedicate this work to you, because I desire an occasion to record my gratitude for all your kindness to me in times past. When you first honoured me by making me your friend, I was a mere youth, while you were in the full maturity of manhood; but you were always kind and tolerant to me; and we were from the first, as we have been ever since, the best of friends. In all our walkings, ridings, and talkings together, I cannot remember a single occasion in which a harsh or unkind word was ever said by one to the other.

I do remember that we were not always of the same mind in our discussions on things in general; but there were some points on which we did agree, and do agree, thoroughly. We both believe that there is such a thing possible as good government, and that it would decidedly be desirable that men should live under good government.

We also think that whatever a man does, he should take great pains in doing it, — that in short, good work is an admirable thing.

It is upon these points of resemblance that I also ask for your sympathy with Cortes. He was a man who loved good government, and did his work, according to his lights, thoroughly.

I have also an author's, as well as a friend's, reason for this dedication. Some time ago, you hinted to me—delicately but decisively—that there might be doubts as to the truth of the wonderful things I have told about Mexico. I assure you there ought to be no such doubts. Your experience will tell you that historians often read a book through, and only make use of it for a single fact, or for an epithet, or for a slight correction. No writer can parade all his authorities. Everything I have ever read about New Spain convinces me that I have not in the slightest degree exaggerated the wonders and the glories of ancient Mexico. The records for this history are immensely voluminous. There are, if I recollect rightly, ninety folio volumes of MS. in the collection of Muñoz. These I went over, as best I could, when residing at Madrid. It is a bold thing to say, but I am certain, that, only from the papers in the lawsuits there recorded, a

life of Cortes might be written which would not contradict what I have written.

I have thought over how I could most easily convince you, from other sources, that my impressions of the grandeur and civilization of the Mexican empire are not unfounded. And the best way that occurs to me is this—that I should show you three accounts, which are in my hands, of the principal market in the city of Mexico, as it existed at the time of the Conquest. These three accounts were written independently, each of the writers being unaware that the others had given any such account. One is from Cortes, addressed to the Emperor; another is from the common soldier, Bernal Diaz, whom neither Cortes, nor any one else in the army, suspected of being the principal historian of their great deeds; and the third is an account written by the man who is called "The Anonymous Conqueror," who must have been a companion of Cortes, but who seems to have been so much struck by the evidence of Mexican civilization, that he gave his mind chiefly to recording it, and hardly cared to chronicle the remarkable

adventures of himself and his fellow-countrymen.

These three accounts essentially coincide. Naturally, each observer enlarges upon those points which strike his peculiar fancy. There is also that discrepancy which is to be seen in the accounts of all independent observers. But, the effect produced upon the mind of the reader is the same. And this effect is, that Mexican civilization had reached a height, which, in many respects, was unequalled, at that time, in any known kingdom of the civilized world.

I have adopted a great many of the notes which are to be found in "The Spanish Conquest in America." Now these notes belong rather to a history than to a biography. I have, however, felt that in a case of this kind, where the authorities are such as cannot, from the rarity of the books or manuscripts, be consulted by the reader, it is desirable occasionally to adduce the very words which support any remarkable statement. Some wit has said that it is the peculiar privilege of Englishmen to skip anything in a book which they do not choose to read. Foot-notes are easily skipped; and those persons

who do not care to verify a statement—the trusting good souls who believe in their author—need not read them; but such men as you and Froude (he was with you when you threw a doubt upon the truthfulness of my Mexican grandeurs) will naturally consult them, and form your own opinions, whether with me or against me, upon my deductions from them.

I have now only to say, in conclusion, that I should not have presumed to dedicate to so indefatigable a student as yourself, this book of mine, if it had cost me no new researches, and if it did not contain my last and most carefully-weighed observations upon the matters to which it relates.

I am always,

Yours affectionately,

ARTHUR HELPS.

LONDON,
*Feb.*, 1871.

P. S. Since writing the above, I have referred again to the work of "The Anonymous Conqueror;" and I find some notes in your hand-

writing on his account of the Market in Mexico. You are, therefore, charged with this knowledge; and I shall be able to show you, that, as I have said before, the other accounts do not essentially differ from that given by this Conqueror.



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# HERNANDO CORTES.

## CHAPTER I.

*The Expeditions prior to that of Cortes—His early life—His appointment to the Command of an Expedition—Sets sail from Santiago.*

THERE are few, if any, heroic persons who are more secure of fame than the principal discoverers and conquerors of the New World. Whether this fame is a blessing or a curse, I do not pretend to pronounce: I only say, that whatever the thing called "fame" may be worth, they must inevitably be blessed or cursed with the possession of it.

Their fame, too, must ever be more large and more lasting than the fame of any other discoverers and any other conquerors. Their discoveries and their conquests were made in regions hitherto unknown to mortals, in regions supposed by prac-

tical men to belong to the realms of fable rather than to those of real land and water.

Again, these discoverers and conquerors have not partaken the fate of their respective nations. When nations fall into decadence, the historical records of these nations have often ceased to have any interest for the rest of the world, and their heroes have lapsed into comparative obscurity. But the discoverers and conquerors of the New World hardly seem to have belonged exclusively to any nation. We look upon them as fellow countrymen to all of us of the Old World. They mainly aided in developing a new era in Europe, and they appeared like demi-gods upon the scene, to close great dynasties in that New World which they discovered and conquered. New nations will probably yet arise, whose historians will have to commence the histories of their nations with records of these discoveries and conquests.

As an illustration of what I mean, I venture to assert, that probably every youth who has had any education, either in the Old or the New World, has some knowledge of the deeds of Columbus, Cortes, and Pizarro, while one of the foremost generals in the world, of the same age

and the same nation, the "Great Captain," as he was justly called, Gonzalvo de Córdova, is unknown to these youths, even by name.

As for the Cid, though great poets and dramatists have done what they could to perpetuate his fame, how small is that fame when compared with that of either Columbus, Cortes, or Pizarro.

The character of Cortes.

The leader, whose life I am about to narrate, was an heroic adventurer, a very politic statesman, and an admirable soldier. He was cruel at times in conduct, but not in disposition; he was sincerely religious, profoundly dissembling, courteous, liberal, amorous, decisive. There was a certain grandeur in all his proceedings. He was very fertile in resources; and, while he looked far forward, he was at the same time almost madly audacious in his enterprises. This strange mixture of valour, religion, policy, and craft, was a peculiar product of that century.

It is not desirable, I think, for a biographer to describe in full detail the character of his hero at the commencement of the biography. It seems to me that he should rather wait to illustrate that character by events. There are, however, two main points in the character of Cortes, which I

shall dwell upon at the outset. These are, his soldier-like qualities and his cruelty. As a commander, the only fault to be imputed to him, was his recklessness in exposing himself to the dangers of personal conflict with the enemy. But then, that is an error to be commonly noticed even in the greatest generals of that period; and Cortes, from his singular dexterity in arms, was naturally prone to fall into this error. As regards his peculiar qualifications for a commander, it may be observed, that great as he was in carrying out large and difficult operations in actual warfare, he was not less so in attending to those minute details upon which so much of the efficiency of troops depends. His companion in arms, Bernal Diaz, says of him, "He would visit the hut of every soldier, see that his weapons were ready at hand, and that he had his shoes on. Those whom he found had neglected anything in this way he severely reprimanded, and compared them to mangy sheep, whose own wool is too heavy for them."

I have said that he was cruel in conduct, but not in disposition. This statement requires explanation. Cortes was a man who always determined to go through with the thing he had

once resolved to do. Human beings, if they came in his way, were to be swept out of it, like any other material obstacles. He desired no man's death, but if people would come between him and success, they must bear the consequences. He did not particularly value human life. The ideas of the nineteenth century in that respect were unknown to him. He had come to conquer, to civilize, to convert (for he was really a devout man from his youth upwards; and, as his chaplain takes care to tell us, knew "many prayers and psalms of the choir" by heart); and the lives of thousands of barbarians, for so he deemed them, were of no account in the balance of his mind, when set against the great objects he had in view. In saying this, I am not apologizing for this cruelty; I am only endeavouring to explain it.

Of all the generals who have been made known to us in history, or by fiction, Claverhouse, as represented by Sir Walter Scott, most closely resembles Cortes. Both of them thorough gentlemen, very dignified, very nice and precise in all their ways and habits, they were sadly indifferent as to the severity of the means by

which they compassed their ends; and bloody deeds sat easily, for the most part, upon their well-bred natures. I make these comments once for all; and shall hold myself excused from making further comments of a like nature when any of the cruelties of Cortes come before us—cruelties which one must ever deeply deplore on their own account, and bitterly regret as ineffaceable stains upon the fair fame and memory of a very great man.

One word more, to show that the cruelty of Cortes was a thing which unhappily belonged to his age, as well as to himself. Las Casas may blame it, but Las Casas was a man who belonged to our time, rather than to the sixteenth century. That for which his contemporaries chiefly blamed Cortes, was his conduct to Velazquez, which conduct, as we shall see, is a thing that admits of large excuse, and need never have greatly troubled the conscience of a man much more conscientious than Cortes ever pretended to be.

It is almost impossible to over-estimate the effect of the prevailing sentiments of the age in which a man lives, on the character of the man himself. These epidemic sentiments may entirely disguise or overlay the natural sentiments

of the man. Titus, so renowned for clemency, exposed to the slaughter of the arena thousands of human beings. The studious and gentle Pliny, who could perceive the virtue that there is in ill-health, and that men were often best when they were most infirm, could write to a friend in high provincial authority, telling him that it would have been an act of cruelty if he had refused to allow a gladiatorial spectacle.*

The conquest of Mexico could hardly have been achieved at this period under any man of less genius than that which belonged to Hernando Cortes. And even his genius would probably not have attempted the achievement, or would have failed in it, but for a singular concurrence of good and evil fortune, which contributed much to the ultimate success of his enterprise. Great difficulties and fearful conflicts of fortune not only stimulate to great attempts, but absolutely create the opportunities for them.

Before, however, bringing Cortes on the scene, the discovery of New Spain must be gradually traced back to its origin, and the connection must

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* See LECKY, *Hist. of European Morals.*

be shown which it had with previous enterprises of a like nature.

Pedigree of discovery in the New World.

Going back, then, to the earliest times of discovery, let us trace the descent of the great mariners and conquerors who preceded in, and made broad, the way for Cortes. The well-known Ojeda was the companion of Columbus. Favoured by the powerful Bishop of Burgos, Ojeda became a discoverer on the Terra-firma. Then followed the disastrous expeditions of Nicuesa and Ojeda. Ojeda dies in obscurity; Nicuesa perishes miserably; and Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, who had come out, concealed from his creditors in the hold of a vessel, takes the command, as it were, of Spanish discovery. Very renowned, and more important even than renowned, were his discoveries. He discovered the South Sea: he came upon a civilization, in the neighbourhood of Darien, which was superior to anything that had been seen in the islands: he heard, in a dim way, of Peru.

Columbus —Ojeda.

Nicuesa and Ojeda.

Vasco Nuñez de Balboa.

Tidings of discovery reach Spain.

The tidings of great discovery near Darien reached the mother-country, and all Spain was excited with the idea of "fishing for gold." Vasco Nuñez was superseded, and Pedrarias sent out

with the most splendid and well-equipped armament that had yet left Spain for the Indies.

Armament of Pedrarias.

Now, among the hidalgoes who had come out with Pedrarias were several who, perceiving that nothing was to be done at Darien, asked permission of the Governor to go to Cuba; and Pedrarias, not knowing what to do with his soldiers, consented. One of these men was Bernal Diaz del Castillo, a simple soldier, who has, however, written a narrative of the most undoubted authority. This man tells us that he and his companions were received in a friendly manner by Velazquez, the Governor of Cuba, who promised to give them *encomiendas** of Indians, whenever there should be vacancies. As these vacancies, however, would only occur from the death of the proprietors, or the confiscation of their property (for the island of Cuba was already pacified, to use the phrase of that day), *encomiendas* of Indians fell vacant but slowly. The impatient conquerors,

Bernal Diaz.

Origin of De Córdova's expedition.

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* *Encomienda* is a word which has no equivalent in English. It means a body of men occupying a certain portion of land, which land was to be worked, and which men were to be employed, in almost any way that might be most profitable to the Spanish Lord.

who had now been three years from home, and had met with nothing hardly but disease and disaster, resolved to form an expedition of discovery on their own account. Taking into their company some Spaniards in Cuba who also were without Indians, this little party of discoverers amounted to one hundred and ten persons. They found a rich man of Cuba willing to join them, named Francisco Hernandez de Córdova, who was chosen as their captain, and who no doubt helped to furnish out their expedition. With their united funds they bought three vessels. One of these vessels belonged to the Governor Velazquez, and he wished to be paid in slaves for his share of the venture, requiring as a condition that the expedition should go to some islands between Cuba and Honduras, make war, and bring back a number of slaves. The gallant company, however, refused to entertain this suggestion. They said that what Velazquez required was not just, and that neither God nor the King demanded of them that they should make free men slaves.* Velazquez ad-

How Velazquez wished to be paid.

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* "Y desque vimos los soldados, que aquello que pedia el Diego Velazquez no era justo, le respondimos, que lo

mitted that they were right, and that their intention of discovering new lands was better than his. He aided them with the necessaries for the voyage, and they departed on the 8th of February, 1517, having on board a celebrated pilot, named Anton Alaminos, who, as a boy, had been with Columbus in one of his voyages.

De Córdova sets sail, Feb. 8, 1517.




When they had doubled Cape San Antonio,

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que dezia, no lo mandava Dios, ni el Rey; que hiziessemos a los libres esclavos."—BERNAL DIAZ DEL CASTILLO, *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva-España*, cap. 1. Madrid, 1632.

they took a westward course, navigating in a haphazard fashion, knowing nothing of the shoals, or the currents, or the prevailing winds. They could not, however, fail to make a great discovery, as any one may see who will look at the map, and observe how near to the continent the western extremity of the island of Cuba lies. Singularly enough, they found land at the nearest spot at which they could have found it, touching at the point of Cotoché. This point was named from the words *con escotoch*, which mean "Come to my house," a friendly invitation which the voyagers heard very often at this part of the coast. They could not but at once remark that the natives of this new-found land were more civilized in dress and in the arts of life than the inhabitants of the islands. They saw also a great town, to which they gave the name of Grand Cairo; and buildings made of stone and mortar were for the first time discovered by the Spanish conquerors. From what remains there are to be seen of buildings, even to the present day, in the province of Yucatan, we may well conclude how great an impression must have been produced upon those Europeans who were first permitted to see the signs of

Discovers land at P.Cotoché.

Yucatan.

a civilization which has puzzled the learned ever since. The natives of Yucatan had apparently, however, made more advance in the arts of life than in the higher attributes of sincerity and good faith. They invited the Spaniards to their houses, laid an ambuscade for them, and wounded several. The Spaniards, in their turn, succeeded in capturing two Indians, who afterwards became interpreters.

The expedition of De Córdova, having begun ill, continued to be unfortunate. The explorers went further westwards and discovered the Bay of Campeche, proceeding as far as Champoton; but they got into an encounter with the natives, lost a great many of their men, suffered from terrible thirst, and, after enduring many miseries, made their way back to Havana, and from thence to Santiago, where the Governor Velazquez then was. The news brought back by the expedition, and certain golden ornaments which they had to show (well-wrought, but not of pure gold), could not fail to stimulate Velazquez to further attempts at discovery. Indeed, the fame of De Córdova's voyage spread far and wide; various conjectures were instantly propounded as to who

De Cordova returns.

these islanders were who built houses of stone and mortar; and some ingenious persons were ready to declare that these Indians must be the descendants of those Jews whom Vespasian and Titus had driven into exile. Velazquez lost no time in fitting out another armada, the command of which was given to a young countryman of his, who was treated by him as a relative, and whose name was Juan de Grijalva. Pedro de Alvarado, a name afterwards too well known in American history, commanded one of the vessels in this expedition. Bernal Diaz was also employed, and Anton Alaminos went out as principal pilot.

Grijalva's expedition sails, April 5, 1518.

Grijalva set sail from Cuba on the 5th of April, 1518, and, his vessels being driven by the currents in a more southerly direction than the former expedition, first saw land at the island of Cozumel, and afterwards resuming the direction which De Córdova's expedition had taken the year before, extended the field of discovery.

Summing up the result of what took place in the course of these expeditions, we may say that they were so far successful that they made the Spaniards acquainted with the existence of new

lands on the continent of America, and with an Indian people of greater civilization than had hitherto been met with, who built houses instead of huts, and whose mode of dress was less primæval than the inhabitants of the islands. Such, with some gold, had been the result of the expe-




ditions under Hernandez de Córdova and Juan de Grijalva, up to the time at which our narrative commences.

Result of discoveries prior to Cortes.

De Córdova had discovered Yucatan;* and

* De Solis and Pinzon had seen part of Yucatan in 1506, but had not landed. See NAV., *Col.*, vol. iii. p. 47. See also HERRERA, dec. I, lib. vi. cap. 17. The name of

Grijalva, entering the river Tabasco, which falls into the Gulf of Mexico, discovered New Spain, a name that was first given to that country in the course of this voyage.

Grijalva went as far as the province of Panuco, but made no settlement in those parts, for which he was severely and unjustly blamed by Velazquez.

Grijalva sends home Pedro de Alvarado.

Previously to returning with the whole of his fleet, Grijalva sent home Pedro de Alvarado with the sick and wounded, and with the gold which had been obtained from the natives in the way of barter. The desire of Velàzquez for discovery and settlement was likely to be increased by the

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Yucatan has been attributed to a mistake which must often have happened. The Spaniards asked the name of the land; the Indians answered, "I do not understand," which passed afterwards for the name. "Los indios no entendiendo lo que les preguntaban, respondian en su lenguaje y decian YUCATAN YUCATAN, que quiere decir *no entiendo, no entiendo:* así los españoles descubridores pensaron que los indios respondian que se llamaba Yucatan, y en esta manera se quedó impropriamente á aquella tierra este nombre Yucatan."—NAVARRETE, SALVÁ, y SAINZ DE BARANDA, *Coleccion de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España*, tom. i., p. 418. Madrid, 1844.

accounts brought back by Alvarado; and, as Grijalva did not return so soon as was expected, Velazquez was anxious to gain tidings of what had become of him. This Governor, accordingly, prepared, or perhaps we should say, authorized the preparation of, a larger fleet than he had hitherto sent out; and, after some hesitation, conferred the command on Cortes.* From the Governor's instructions, it appears that one of the first objects of the expedition was to have been the search after Grijalva,† but that captain returned to Cuba before Cortes sailed.

Velazquez prepares a new fleet: gives the command to Cortes.

It will here be desirable to give a brief account of the previous life of this Commander, as much may be inferred from it in reference to the important transactions which are now to be narrated.

Hernando Cortes was born in the year 1485,‡

Birth and parentage of Cortes.

* The Governor had at first offered the command to a certain Baltasar Bermudez; but he asked such conditions as Velazquez would not consent to. "Enójose con él, y echóle de sí, quizá como solia, con desmandádas palaras."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. iii. cap. 113.

† See the instructions given by Velazquez to Cortes, *Documentos Inéditos*, tom. i. p. 385.

‡ The day of his birth has been said to be the same as

at Medellin, in Estremadura. His father was Martin Cortes, of Monroy: his mother Donna Catalina Pizarro Altamirano. The mother of Cortes was a remarkable woman, as the mothers of distinguished men are wont to be. The writer of an anonymous life of Cortes, who was evidently well acquainted with the family of Cortes, as he mentions who was his nurse, and where she came from, thus describes the mother of Cortes:—"Catalina was not inferior to any woman of her time in honourable repute, in modesty, and conjugal love." Both father and mother were of good birth, but poor. The little Hernando was a sickly child; and many times during his childhood was at the point of death.

His education.

When he was fourteen years of age, his parents sent him to the University of Salamanca, where he remained two years, "studying

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that of Luther; but this is a mistake. A Spanish writer builds upon the supposed coincidence a contrast between the merits of the two: the one "persecuting;" the other extending the "Catholic Faith." "Nació este Ilustre Varon el dia mismo que aquella bestia infernal, el Pérfido Heresiarca Lutero, salió al mundo," &c.—PIZARRO, *Varones Ilustres del Nuevo Mundo*, p. 66.

grammar,"* and preparing himself for taking the degree of bachelor-at-law.

Weary of study, or, as appears probable, weary of the life of a poor student, Cortes returned, without leave, to his parents at Medellin. He neither found, nor made, a happy home for himself;† and he determined to seek his fortune as a soldier. For adventurous young men, at that time, two careers were open: to serve under the generous and splendid Gonsalvo de Córdova, in Italy, or to seek for renown and riches in the New World.

Resolves upon a soldier's life.

At this juncture, Nicolas de Ovando was just going out to supersede Bobadilla, in the Government of Hispaniola, and Cortes resolved to accompany that distinguished personage, also a native of Estremadura. But, while Ovando's armament was preparing, Cortes went one night "to speak with a lady," as his chaplain judi-

Will accompany Ovando.

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* This meant "a course of study in Latin and Greek, as well as of rhetoric." See note in FOLSOM's introduction to his translation of the despatches of Cortes. Madrid, 1772.

† "Daba í tomaba, enojos, í ruido, en Casa de sus Padres."—GOMARA, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. I.

Meets with an accident.

ciously expresses it, and as he was walking upon the wall of the back court-yard, it fell with him. The injuries which the young lover then received, threw him into a fever, and before he recovered, the armament had sailed. He resolved, therefore, to adopt the other course—to go into Italy and take service under the Great Captain. With this view he went to Valencia, but in that city he fell ill again, and passed a year there of obscure hardship and poverty. Finally he returned to Medellin, with the firm intention of proceeding thence to the Indies. His parents gave him their blessing and some money; and, in his 19th year, A.D. 1504, he took his passage from San Lucar, in a merchant vessel, for St. Domingo, the chief town of Hispaniola. The voyage was a bad one, and the vessel on the point of being wrecked, a danger in which Cortes conducted himself with the bravery of one "who was to be engaged in other greater hazards."*

Takes his passage for St. Domingo. 1504.

A handsome, plausible, well-educated, well-born youth of the Governor's own province, who could tell him the local news at home, was sure

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* "Animábolos el Moço Cortés, como el que se havia de ver en otros maiores aprietos."—HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. I, lib. vi. cap. 13

to be well received by Ovando. Accordingly, Cortes was employed, under that Governor, in pacifying certain provinces which had revolted, or were considered by the Spaniards to have revolted; and when the war was ended, Ovando gave the young man an *encomienda* of Indians, and a notarial office in the town of Azua, which had been lately founded.

Obtains an *encomienda* in Hispaniola.

It is an interesting circumstance in the life of Cortes, that he was nearly accompanying Diego de Nicuesa, and would have done so, but for an abscess in the right knee. Had Cortes joined the expedition of Nicuesa, it probably would not have been so unfortunate. He might have filled the place that Vasco Nunez attained to; and his discoveries would then have naturally tended towards South America. But a still more arduous task was reserved for Cortes. His was not the nature to be satisfied with a tame provincial life, winning gold by the slow process of agriculture, or even by the swifter one of mining; and when the second Admiral, Don Diego Columbus, sent Diego Velazquez to subdue and colonize Cuba, Cortes accompanied him, and acted, it is said, as one of his secretaries.

Goes with Velazquez to Cuba.

After the island had been subdued, Cortes was

one of those who received a grant of Indians; but here again his unquiet intriguing nature did not suffer him to settle down at once into a pains-taking colonist, or a sedulous official man.

The story of his early life now becomes very confused, as is naturally the case with that of any man who rises to great eminence, and who was connected with some ambiguous transactions. His partizans will try and ignore these affairs altogether,—his enemies will know far more about them than ever happened; and the result is, that the future biographer will have to take a middle course, or, which is wiser perhaps, to side now with one party, now with the other, in a most uncertain and dubious manner, relying upon small traits of circumstance and delicate indications of character.

Cortes in disfavour with the Governor.

There are two stories of a very different kind, to account for the indignation which Cortes brought upon himself at one time from the Governor, Diego Velazquez. According to one of these accounts, news arrived at Cuba that certain Judges of Appeal, who had been appointed in Spain, had arrived in Hispaniola. It was not often the fortune of governors in the Indies to be popular,—at least, with more than

their own faction; and Velazquez formed no exception to this rule. The difficulty for those who thought they were aggrieved by him, was how to carry their complaints to the Judges. Cortes, who, no doubt (if the story be true), had some private grudge against the Governor, agreed to be the bearer of these complaints, and undertook the bold task of passing from one island to the other in an open boat.* He was, however, suspected, seized, and so completely found guilty in the Governor's estimation, that he wished to hang him. Certain persons, however, interceded for Cortes; and Diego Velazquez commuted the punishment into that of sending him as a prisoner to the island of Hispaniola. He was accordingly

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* Benito Martinez, who presented a memorial to the King, on behalf of Velazquez, in the year 1519, confirms this part of the story.—"Ansimismo dice: que porque este Hernando Cortés capitan, se levantó otra vez cuando la isla Fernandina se empezó de poblar con una carabela y con ciertos compañeros, é Diego Velazquez le prendió, y á ruego de muchos buenos le perdonó, é ahora ha hecho este otro buen hecho en se alzar con la isla, y para hacer su mal hecho bueno, dice mucho mal de Diego Velazquez, y todos los que en su nombre vienen."—*Documentos Inéditos*, tom. i. p. 408.

put on board a vessel bound for that island. Cortes, however, extricated himself from his fetters; swam, or, as it is said, floated on a log, back again to the shores of Cuba; and took refuge in a church. There he remained some days. A crafty alguazil lay in wait for him, caught him one day as, intent upon paying his addresses to a lady, he was tempted to go beyond the sacred precincts,* and made a prisoner of him. It seemed now as if the fate of Cortes was determined; but many persons interceded for him; and Velazquez, who was a violent, but good-natured man, the first burst of his wrath having been spent, forgave Cortes, but was unwilling to receive such a person into his service any more.

There are several things very improbable in this story,† and Gomara removes some of the

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* "Descuidándose un Dia, por salir á los amores, un Alguacil, llamado Juan Escudero, á quien Hernando Cortés ahorcó en Nueva-España, entrando por la otra puerta de la Iglesia, le abraçó por detrás, í le llevó á la Cárcel."—HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. I, lib. ix. cap. 9.

† It is improbable, for instance, that Velazquez should have wished to send Cortes to Hispaniola; and it is strange that the latter should have been so anxious to make his way back to Cuba.

stigma of it, by saying that Cortes went to Cuba, as an officer of Pasamonte,* the Treasurer, and was employed in the King's service, although the Chaplain admits that Velazquez also employed Cortes to manage business and to look after buildings.†

The other story is, that Cortes was required by Velazquez to marry a certain Donna Catalina Xuarez, one of a family of Spanish ladies who had come over in the suite of the Vice-Queen, Maria de Toledo,—the Governor himself being in love with one of her sisters. It is said that Cortes had given his word to marry Donna Catalina, and was unwilling to redeem it. However this may be, Cortes did marry her, and told Las Casas that he was as well pleased with her as if

Marriage of Cortes.

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* "Fernando Cortés fue á la conquista, por Oficial del Tesorero Miguel de Pasamonte, para tener cuenta con los Quintos, í Hacienda del Rei, í aun el mesmo Diego Velazquez se lo rogó, por ser hábil, í diligente."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 4. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. ii.

† "Tuvo gracia, í autoridad con Diego Velazquez, para despachar negocios, y entender en Edificios, como fueron la Casa de la Fundicion, y un Hospital."—*Ibid.*

she had been the daughter of a duchess.* In this story, too, he is spoken of as having been arrested, as having escaped, and as having taken refuge in a sanctuary. According to this account, also, he is made out to have had papers upon him which told against Velazquez.

For my own part I am inclined to acquit Cortes of that treachery towards Velazquez which might be inferred from the first story. But I suspect that Catalina Xuarez had considerable cause of complaint against Cortes, whose enmity against the Governor was probably provoked by his siding with her relations.

Cortes reconciled to the Governor.

Whichever may have been the true story, or whatever the truth in each story, it is certain that, after a serious feud, the Governor and Cortes became friends, and, as a proof of this, it is mentioned that Velazquez stood as god-father to one of the children of Cortes. After his marriage,

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* "Así que casóse al cabo no menos rico que su Muger; y en aquellos dias de su pobreza, humildad y bajo estado le oí decir, y estando conmigo me lo dijo, que estaba tan contento con ella como si fuera hija de una Duquesa."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. iii. cap. 27.

Cortes employed himself in getting gold by means of his Indians:—"How many of whom died in extracting this gold for him, God will have kept a better account than I have," says Las Casas.

It must have been in the nature of Velazquez to forgive heartily, for we find that he not only did not molest Cortes any more, but that he conferred upon him the office of Alcalde in the town of Santiago, the capital of Cuba. Cortes, therefore, notwithstanding all his previous mishaps, was, in the year 1518, a rising and a prosperous man; and, being thirty-three years old, was at a fitting time of life for a career of vigorous adventure.

Opposition to the appointment of Cortes.

In conferring the command of the fleet on Cortes, Velazquez had been influenced by his secretary Andres de Duero, and by Amador de Lares,* the King's Accountant in Cuba; but he

* Amador de Lares had been a long time in Italy, and Las Casas was wont to warn the Governor to "beware of twenty-two years of Italy." "Solia yo decir á Diego Velazquez por sentir lo que de Amador de Lares yo sentia: Señor, Guardaos de veinte y dos años de Italia." —Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. iii. cap. 113.

disobliged several powerful persons in the island, relations of his own, who were not slow in suggesting that it was very imprudent to confide the expedition to Cortes. The old grudge between the Governor and Cortes was a good subject for these malcontents to dilate upon, and was, no doubt, made use of by all those who did not wish well to the newly-appointed Commander. The sentiments of these opponents to Cortes cannot be better illustrated than by some jests, which, perhaps, were all their own, but which were uttered in public by a buffoon in the household of Velazquez, named Cervantes. As this buffoon was one day accompanying Cortes and the Governor to the sea-side, where they wished to observe how the vessels were getting on, and was a little ahead of the party, uttering his pleasantries, he turned to the Governor, and said, "Diego." "Well, fool, what do you want?" replied the Governor; "Look what you are about! we shall have to go and hunt after Cortes." Upon this, Cortes is said to have made some angry answer, which I do not believe in, as it does not show his usual skilfulness and self-command. But it is more probable that Andres de Duero replied for

Foresight, or knavery, of a buffoon.

him, saying, "Be quiet, you drunken idiot! do not play the rascal any more; we know well that these malicious things which pretend to be jests, do not come from you."* But the buffoon, not by any means dismayed, went on saying all the way, "Viva, viva! to the health of my friend Diego, and of his lucky Captain, Cortes! and I swear, my friend, that I shall go with Cortes myself to these rich lands, that I may not see you crying, my friend Diego, at the bad bargain you have just made."

It would be difficult to say what impression these sayings, and many like them, uttered in jest and in earnest, produced upon the uncertain mind of the Governor. One thing, however, he should have recollected, that if half trust is unwise in dealing with a friend, anything less than unbounded confidence is too little trust in dealing with a reconciled enemy—especially one who has been injuriously treated.

Obliterate enmity by complete confidence.

With regard to the Governor's power to remove Cortes, which some have denied, I have no

* "Calla, borracho loco, no seas mas vellaco, que bien atendido tenemos, que essas malicias socolor de gracias, no salen de tí."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 19.

doubt that it was amply sufficient for the purpose, up to the moment of starting. It is a difficult question, which there are not facts fully to decide, what part Cortes contributed to the expenses of the expedition. His partizans assert that it was two-thirds of the whole; but their own statement will hardly bear out that.* Cortes, like Cæsar, whom we shall find he resembles in other respects, was fond of expense, and was probably an indebted man. There is no doubt that whatever Cortes did advance was chiefly borrowed † capital, and borrowed on the

* "Oyó decir á los de la cuidad que el dicho Cortés habia gastado mas de 5,000 castellanos, é que el dicho Diego Velazquez le habia prestado para ello 2,000 castellanos sobre cierto oro que tenia por fundir, é que oyó decir que el dicho Diego Velazquez habia puesto 1,800 castellanos en rescates é vinos é otras cosas, é tres navíos, el uno era bergantin, é que el dicho Cortés demas de los 5,000 castellanos puso siete navíos suyos, é de sus amigos é de efectos."—*Documentos Inéditos*, tom. i. p. 487.

† "Y como ciertos Mercaderes, amigos suyos, que se dezian Jaime Tria, ò Geronimo Tria, y un Pedro de Xeres, le vieron con Capitania, y prosperado, le prestaron quatro mil pesos de oro, y le dieron otras mercaderias sobre la renta de sus Indios."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 20.

security which his appointment by Velazquez afforded, for it is quite ridiculous to assert that he had any independent powers from certain Jeronimite Fathers, who were ruling at Hispaniola.

I must remark here upon the deplorable manner in which all these expeditions were managed, the Governor descending to the condition of a merchant-adventurer, and being concerned in the profits of each enterprise. The lamentable result of this practice was seen in all the Spanish settlements; and it was a practice unfortunately sanctioned and partaken by the Spanish Monarchs themselves.

Governors should not be traders.

The complicated form of government, also, in the Spanish Indies had the worst results. Diego Velazquez was the Vice-roy of a Vice-roy; and the person from whom he held authority, Don Diego Columbus, had been, to a certain extent, superseded by other authorities. A surer mode of creating factions could not have been devised. Authority, like land, cannot be held by too simple a tenure, and intermediate interests are fatal to the improvement of the country to be ruled, as of the soil to be tilled.

Indirect tenure of authority injurious.

It was on the 15th of November, 1518, that

Grijalva returns, Nov. 15, 1518.

Grijalva returned to Santiago, bringing with him many tempting signs of the riches of the country he had begun to discover. It is by no means improbable that his arrival produced some considerable change* in the mind of Velazquez, which would be observed, and rendered more and more unfavourable to Cortes, by those who had already reminded the Governor that the newly-appointed captain was "an Estremaduran, full of high, crafty, and ambitious thoughts."†

It is important to enter into these details with respect to the departure of Cortes, as so much of his future conduct depended upon the position he

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* Such is Gomara's account ("Bolvió á Cuba Joan de Grijalva en aquella mesma saçon, í huvo con su venida mudança, en Diego Velazquez."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 7. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. ii.), and this is one of the instances in which there does not appear any motive that Cortes could have for deceiving his chaplain.

† "Que era el Estremeño, mañoso, altivo, amador de honras, í Hombre que se vengaria en aquello de lo pasado."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 7. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. ii.

The reader will observe the influence which a man's place of birth had upon his fortunes in Spain.

was to take up now in reference to his employer, Velazquez. In truth, the fate of a great empire hung upon the whisperings of certain obscure and interested persons, on the hired jests of a buffoon, and on the petty provincial jealousy which was apt to make an Estremaduran hateful to a Biscayan or to an Andalucian.

Much may be said upon the singular injustice, not to speak of the folly, of depriving Cortes of such a command, after having once confided it to him. His means, his credit, everything that he possessed, were pledged. He had even altered his style of dress, and wore for the first time a plume of feathers,* that well became his very handsome countenance, which, however, needed no such adornment to make it distinguished as that of one who was fit to rule his fellow-men. The wisdom of this change of dress may well be questioned. It added, no doubt, to the envious sayings uttered against him; and Cortes should, by this time, have known men well enough to be

* "É demas desto se començo, de pulir, é abellidar en su persona, mucho mas que de ántes, é se puso un penacho de plumas con su medalla de oro, que le parecia muy bien."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 20.

aware that it is in little things of this kind that you can the least venture to offend them.

Cortes eager to sail.

It is probable that the Governor began to think of conferring the command of the expedition upon some other person, and that, intelligence of this change of disposition being conveyed to Cortes, did not render him less alert in his endeavours to get his fleet equipped, and to make a start. To suppose, however, that he really did slip away by night, and that, on the Governor being apprized of it, he hastened to the shore, and that a dramatic conversation took place, in which Cortes said that "these things, and things like them, should be done before they are thought of,"* seems to my mind entirely improbable. In fact, such a story is nearly certain to be the mythical form in which the transaction would come to be related, the fact merely being that Cortes made immense and perhaps secre

* "Y parando allí dicele Diego Velazquez, í com Compadre así os vais? es buena manera esta de des pediros de mí? Respondio Cortés: Señor, perdónem Vuestra Merced, porque estas cosas y las semejante ántes han de ser hechas que pensadas: vea Vuestr Merced que me manda."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las India* MS., lib. iii. cap. 114.

haste to get the ships ready, and to take leave of the Governor.

There is a story, which doubtless is true, as Las Casas had it from the mouth of Cortes himself, that he laid hold of all the cattle which a certain butcher had in his possession, who was bound under penalty to supply the town of Santiago, and that Cortes paid for what he seized by a gold chain, which he took off his own neck and gave to the butcher.*

All this haste,† which was afterwards, no doubt, made known to Velazquez, would naturally give him an additional reason for wishing

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* "Reclamando, aunque no á voces porque si las diera uizá le costara la vida, que le llevarian la pena por no ar carne al pueblo; quitóse luego Cortés una cadenilla e óro que traia al cuello, y diósela al obligado Carnicero, esto el mismo Cortés á mí me lo dixo."—Las Casas, *ist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. iii. cap. 114.

† Mr. Prescott is persuaded that the story of the andestine departure of Cortes is true; but this painsking and truth-loving historian is, I think, in this stance misled by Las Casas, who, though truthful, was dulous, and in this case was not an eye-witness, and s not, as Mr. Prescott supposes, residing at that time the island. The story of the purchase of the proions may be quite correct, and this I believe to be all

to supersede Cortes, as showing that Cortes had divined what had been the Governor's thoughts. The astute Estremaduran, far from avoiding Velazquez at this critical period, took care to be constantly with him, and to be always showing him the greatest attention and respect.* I should, therefore, prefer giving credence to the simple account of Bernal Diaz, who was present, and who says, "Andres de Duero kept advising Cortes that he should hasten to embark, for that the Velazquez party (*los Velazquez*) kept the Governor in a state of excessive changefulness by the importunities of those who were his relations; and after Cortes perceived this, he ordered his wife, Donna Catalina, to see that all the provisions and the dainties, which wives are accustomed to make for their husbands, especially for such an expedition, were immediately em-

How Bernal Diaz narrates the departure of Cortes.

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that Las Casas could quote Cortes for, when he says immediately afterwards, "esto el mismo Cortés á mí me lo dixo."

The truth probably is that Cortes sailed suddenly but not clandestinely.

* "De lo qual tenia dello aviso el Cortes, y á esta causa no se quitava de la compañia de estar con su Governador, y siempre mostrandose muy gran su servidor."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 20.

barked on board the ships. And then he gave orders, by sound of trumpet, that all the masters, and pilots, and soldiers should be ready, and that on such a day and night none of them should remain on shore. And, after he had given that command, and had seen them all embarked, he went to take leave of Diego Velazquez, accompanied by his great friends and companions, Andres de Duero and the Contador Amador de Lares, and all the principal inhabitants of the city; and, after many parting salutations from Cortes to the Governor and from the Governor to Cortes, he took leave of him: and the next day, very early in the morning, after having heard mass, we went to the ships, and the same Diego Velazquez turned to accompany Cortes, and many other hidalgoes, until we were about to sail, and with a prosperous voyage in a few days we arrived at the town of Trinidad."*

It is to be remarked, as strongly confirming the account of Bernal Diaz, that Velasquez himself, in a letter of complaint against Cortes, to be laid before the Emperor, says nothing about

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* Bernal Diaz, cap. 20.

Cortes having stolen away, but simply describes the transaction thus: "I sent in that Armada 600 men, amongst whom I named as captain and principal leader of it and them, a certain Hernando Cortes." Velazquez then proceeds to say why he chose Cortes—namely, because he appeared to be a judicious man and a great friend of his (the Governor's), and also because he had had much experience of the Governor's way of dealing with the colonists from Spain and the native Indians.*

Cortes sets sail from Santiago.

It was on the 18th of November, 1518, that Cortes and his companions set sail from Santiago.

His banner, made of taffety, displayed a red cross on a black ground, sprinkled with white and blue flames;† and, inside the border, was a motto which said, "Let us follow the Cross, and in that sign we shall conquer."‡

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* "Carta de Velasquez al Figueroa." "De lo que habia fecho Fernando Cortes." Nov. 17, 1519.

† I suppose the proper heraldic description would be, "Sable, semée of flames argent and azure; a cross, gules."

‡ Herrera, "Hist. de las Indias," dec. II. lib. iv. cap. 6.

# CHAPTER II.

*Cortes refuses to be superseded—Sails for Cozumel—Thence to Tabasco—His first victory in New Spain—Sails on to St. Juan de Ulua—Is chosen General—Enters Cempoala—Founds Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz—Sends messengers to the Spanish Coast—Destroys the Fleet.*

CORTES proceeded on his way, and was fortunate enough to obtain, by promises of payment, with force visible in the background, supplies of provisions, both from the King's stores at Macaca, and from a laden vessel which he met with. In fact, as he said afterwards, he played the part of a "gentleman corsair." After he had arrived at Trinidad, formal orders came from Velazquez to Verdugo, the Alcalde Mayor of that town, to deprive Cortes of the command. But this was now too late. Cortes, as De Solis remarks, knew how to gain men's hearts, and how "to be a superior without ceasing

Velazquez would deprive Cortes of the command.

to be a companion." Indeed, he gained over the messengers whom Velazquez sent; and such was the disposition of the fleet towards its Commander, that it would have been impossible for Verdugo to supersede Cortes. He did not attempt it. In truth, this was a most unreasonable proceeding on the part of Velazquez; and though it may be said, that Cortes would have shown a higher nobility of mind if he had obeyed the orders of his superior, yet it could hardly be expected that an ambitious young man, who had spent all his money, and become indebted, in order to engage in this expedition, should suffer himself to be deprived of his command in this capricious manner. He wrote a letter of remonstrance and re-assurance to Velazquez, and then sailed on to Havana. A similar missive to the former one from Velazquez reached the Alcalde there; but it had no effect. The Alcalde did not dare to arrest Cortes, who wrote another letter to Velazquez in the same strain as before, and then set sail, on the next day, the 10th of February, 1519, for the island of Cozumel.

Cortes does not obey.

This series of transactions was very important. Cortes had now settled the course of his career.

He could not return, like Hernandez de Córdova or Grijalva: there was nothing now left for him but ruin, or such ample success as should efface all previous disobedience and misconduct.

The armament consisted of five hundred and fifty Spaniards, two or three hundred Indians, some few negroes, and twelve or fifteen horses, and, for artillery, ten brass guns and some falconets. Bernal Diaz rightly gives a list and an account of the horses.* In truth, it would be

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* "The Captain Cortes, a dark chestnut horse, which died immediately on arriving at San Juan de Ulua.

"Pedro de Alvarado and Hernando Lopes de Avila, a very good chestnut mare for draught or for riding: and, after we came to New Spain, Pedro de Alvarado bought the half of the mare from Lopes de Avila, or took it from him by force.

"Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero, a grey mare, a good charger, which Cortes bought from him with some gold cord."

And so there follows a list of thirteen people, each of whom had one of these valuable possessions, and the last man mentioned, Juan Sedeño, was considered the richest man in the armament, for he possessed a ship, a mare, a negro, some cazabi-bread and bacon; and, as Diaz remarks, at that time neither horses nor negroes were to be had except at great expense.

difficult to estimate the number of men that one horse might be considered equivalent to.

Cortes lands at Cozumel.

Upon the landing of Cortes at Cozumel the inhabitants fled; but, Cortes capturing some of them, and treating them kindly, the rest returned, and proved submissive and obliging hosts to the Spaniards.

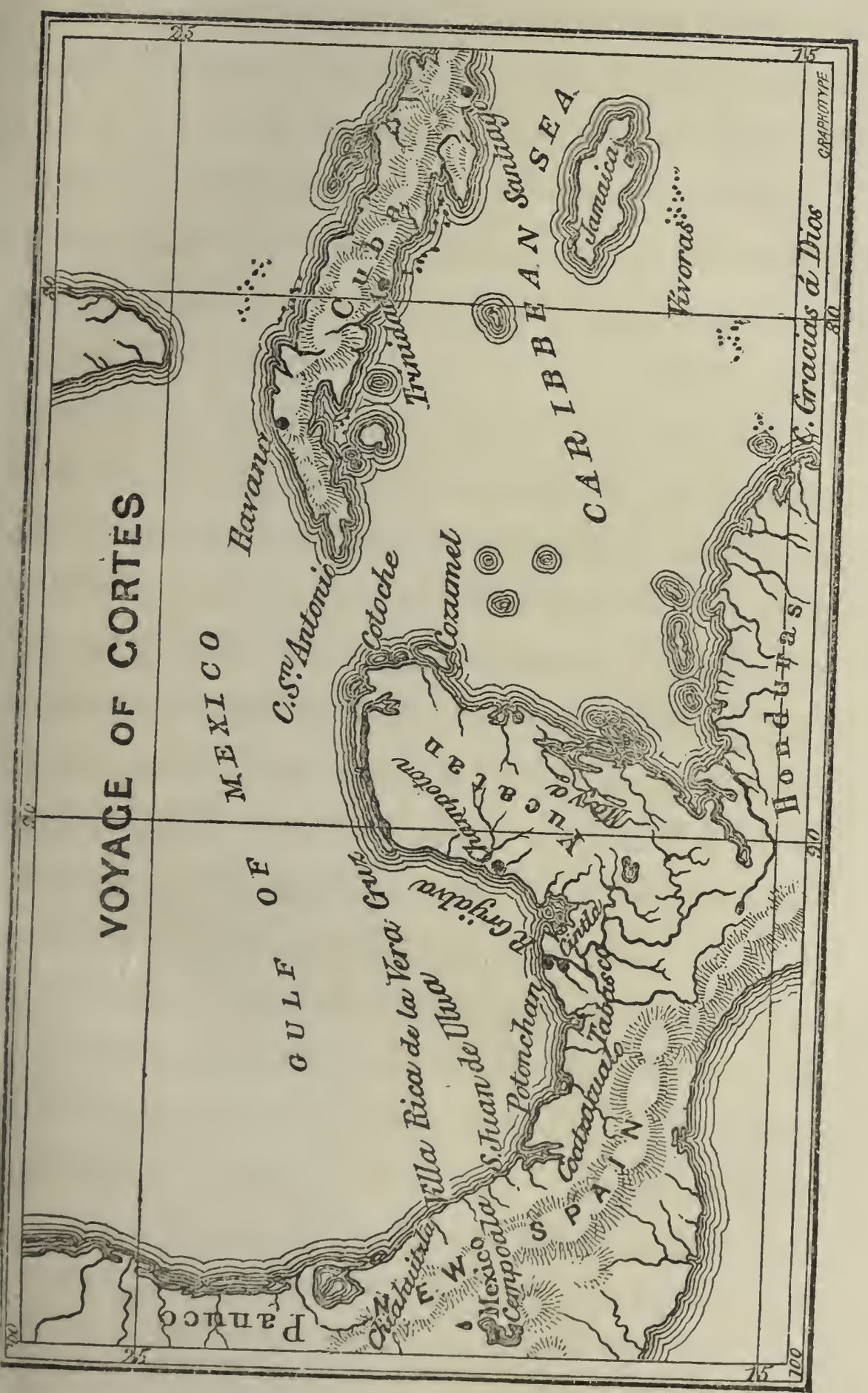
It was at Cozumel that Cortes, "who put great diligence into everything he did,"* called Bernal Diaz and a Biscayan named Martin Ramos, and asked them what they thought was meant by the words, "Castillan, Castillan," which he was told the Indians of Cotoché had addressed to them when they were in the expedition of Hernandez de Córdova; and Cortes added that he had thought about this many times,† and that by chance there might be Spaniards in those lands. Accordingly, inquiries were made; it was ascertained that there were Spaniards somewhere in that country, and Cortes caused search to be made for them. It was not successful then, and the fleet sailed away; but on its return to Cozumel (which oc-

Search for Spaniards lost on that coast.

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* "En todo ponia gran diligencia."—Bernal Diaz.

† Cortes does not seem to have communicated that it was part of his instructions to look for these men.


VOYAGE OF CORTES
MEXICO
GULF OF
CARIBBEAN SEA
Havana
C. St. Antonio
Trinidad
Santiago
Jamaica
Vivoras
Cotoche
Cozumel
Yucatan
Honduras
C. Gracias á Dios
Grijalva
Tabasco
Campoala
Mexico
S. Juan de Ulua
Vella Rica de la Vera Cruz
Panuco
PHOTYPE

curred in consequence of the leakage of one of the vessels), one of the Spaniards sought for made his appearance.

Geronimo de Aguilar is found.

His name was Geronimo de Aguilar, a native of Ecija, and he related how he had been one of the crew under Valdivia, who was sent home by the inhabitants of Darien, in 1511, to represent their case to the court of Spain. They had been wrecked at the Vívoras, near Jamaica. Taking to their boat, they were thrown on the coast of the province of Maya, and fell into the power of a cacique of those parts. Valdivia and some of his men were killed and devoured; this man, Geronimo de Aguilar, escaped with another Spaniard, and came into the hands of a cacique who ultimately treated them well. This other Spaniard, who had also received the message of Cortes, was not inclined to leave his wife and children, and moreover he was ashamed to show himself with his nostrils and his ears bored after the manner of the people with whom he lived. Geronimo de Aguilar served afterwards as interpreter to Cortes; and an interpreter was so useful that it was looked upon as a miraculous interposition that the fleet had been obliged to return to Cozumel, and had thus

A favourable omen and a singular advantage.

secured, at the outset of their undertaking, the services of so valuable a comrade.

It is worthy of notice that the inhabitants of Cozumel were found to worship an idol in the shape of a cross.* This statement is amply confirmed by the discoveries recently made in Central America.†

Leaving Cozumel, and passing round the coast of Yucatan, Cortes made his entry at the river of Grijalva into New Spain. After some resistance from the natives, he disembarked, and took possession of the country in the name of the Spanish Monarch. Proceeding inland, he found that he was in a territory called Tabasco; and there oc-

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* "En medio del qual havia una cruz de Cal, tan alta como diez palmos, á la qual tenian, í adoraban por Dios de la Lluvia."—GOMARA, *Crónica*, cap. 15.

"Era Cozumél el mayor Santuario para los indios que habia en este reino de Yucatan y á donde recurrian en romeria de todo él por unas calzadas que le atravesaban todo, y hoy permanecen en muchas partes vestigios dellas."—DIEGO LOPEZ COGOLLUDO, *Historia de Yucatan*, lib. i. cap. 6. Campeche, 1842.

† See Stephens's "Central America," vol. ii. p. 345, where there is an engraving of a tablet at Palenque, in which two priests are making offerings to a highly ornamented cross.

First battle with the Indians of New Spain, March 25, 1519.

curred his first great battle with the natives. They behaved with the most conspicuous courage. Bernal Diaz says: "I recollect that, when we let off the guns, the Indians uttered loud cries, and whistling sounds, and threw earth and straw into the air, that we should not see the damage which we were doing to them; and then they sounded their trumpets, uttered their warlike cries, and shouted, 'Ala Tala.'" It appears that the Tabascans had some notion of an ambuscade; but all their military skill and prowess were of little avail against the horses and the cannon of the Spaniards. Many of the Spaniards were wounded in this encounter, and two of them died of their wounds. Gomara speaks of St. James having appeared in the battle on a white horse; but Bernal Diaz, while admitting that such might have been the case, says that "he, sinner as he was, was not worthy to be permitted to see it."

The battle of Cintla.

This battle was called the battle of Cintla; and to commemorate their success, the Spaniards changed the name of the chief town of the Tabascans from Potonchan to that of Santa Maria de la Vitoria.

The victory was of the utmost service to

Cortes. It made the Tabascans submissive to him; and, with other presents which they brought to the conqueror, were twenty female slaves, whose business it was to make bread, and who carried with them the stones between which, after the Oriental fashion, they were accustomed to pound their maize. Amongst these Indian women was a person of great intelligence, who was destined to play a considerable part in the conquest of Mexico. The story of her life was a singular one. Though found in the condition of a slave, she was of high birth, being the daughter of a cacique who ruled over Painala as his principal town, and possessed other dependent towns. Painala was in the Mexican province of Coatzacualco: she was accordingly able to speak Mexican. Her father died when she was but a girl, and her mother married another cacique, a young man. They had a son born to them, and wishing to secure the heritage for him, and to despoil her, they gave her by night to some Indians of Xicalango, pretending to their own people that she had died. From these masters she passed, probably by sale, to the Tabascans, by whom, as we have seen, she was presented to Cortes. She was

Donna Marina: her early life.

baptized under the name of Marina; and afterwards served faithfully as an interpreter. Indeed, her fidelity was assured by the love which she bore to her master. Bernard Diaz says that "She was handsome, clever, and eager to be useful" (one that will have an oar in every boat); "and she looked the great lady that she was."

There is hardly any person in history to whom the ruin of that person's native land can be so distinctly brought home, as it can be to the wicked mother of Donna Marina. Cortes, valiant and skilful as he was in the use of the sword, was not less valiant, (perhaps we might say not less audacious,) nor less skilful, in the use of the tongue. All the craft which he afterwards showed in negotiation, would have been profitless without a competent and trusty interpreter. Now Marina knew two languages. She knew the Mexican language, which was spoken at her birthplace; she also knew the language of Tabasco. Now the language of Tabasco was the same as that spoken in Yucatan. The little island of Cozumel, where Geronimo de Aguilar was found, lies just off the coast of Yucatan; and the language of Yucatan was spoken there. This Gero-

Donna Marina as an interpreter.

nimo, therefore, and Donna Marina could understand one another perfectly; and the process of interpretation went on in this way: Cortes spoke to Geronimo in Spanish; he translated it into Yucatanese; and then Donna Marina rendered it into Mexican. After a little time the beautiful Donna Marina learnt Spanish; and then the services of Geronimo de Aguilar were dispensed with. If a medal had been struck to commemorate the great deeds of Cortes, the head of Donna Marina should have been associated with that of Cortes on the face of the medal; for, without her aid, his conquest of Mexico would never have been accomplished.

Cortes, who from the first showed himself intent upon conversion, placed a cross in the great temple of Potonchan; and, before his departure, celebrated, with what pomp he could, the feast of Palm Sunday, Padre Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo and the Licentiate Juan Diaz having endeavoured to instruct the Tabascans in the rudiments of Christianity. Gomara says that the Tabascans broke their idols and received the cross; but the account which a much later historian gives is the more probable one,—namely, that their docility

was more inclined to receive another God than to renounce any one of their own.*

Cortes arrives at San Juan de Ulua.

Immediately after his celebration of the feast of Palm Sunday, Cortes returned to his ships and, continuing his voyage, arrived at San Juan de Ulua on Holy Thursday of the year 1519. A little incident occurred in the course of this voyage, very characteristic of the men and of the time. As they coasted along, keeping close to the shore, the former companions of De Córdova and Grijalva kept pointing out to Cortes those parts of the coast with which they were familiar, naming this river, and that town, this mountain, and that headland. Remarking the conversation, a certain cavalier named Alonso Hernando de Puertocarrero, approached Cortes, and said, "It seems to me, Señor, that these gentlemen, who have been twice to this land, have been saying to you,

'Behold France, Montesinos,
Behold Paris, its chief city,

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* "Pero solo se encontraba en ellos una docilidad de rendidos mas inclinada á reciber otro Dios, que á dexar alguno de los suyos."—De Solis, *Conquista de la Nueva España*, lib. i. cap. 20.

Behold the waters of the Douro,
Where they fall into the sea.'*

I say to you, observe these rich lands, and know well what to do." To which Cortes replied, "Let God give us good fortune in battle, as he gave the Paladin Roldan; for the rest, having such men as yourself and other cavaliers for captains, I shall know well what to do."

It is possible that Puertocarrero did not make the allusion without a little touch of satire, but the words may also have conveyed a serious meaning, and appear to have been so construed by Cortes. It is one of the chief merits of a popular literature, whatever its kind, that it affords the means of so much being conveyed, when so little is said. Montesinos, in the Spanish romance, alluded to, is the grandson of Charlemagne. His parents are banished from court, upon the suggestion of a false enemy named

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* "Romances Caballerescos," núm. 29. G. B. Depping, Romancero Castellano."

"Cata Francia, Montesinos,
Cata Paris, la ciudad,
Cata las aguas de Duero
Do van á dar en la mar."

Tomillos. Montesinos is brought up in a hermit's cell; and, when the youth becomes complete in the knowledge of arms, his father takes him up to a lofty eminence, and there, without any affront to the geography of romances in the middle ages, points out to him, in the stanza quoted above, Paris and the Douro, the palace of the King, and the castle of his enemy, Tomillos. The youth goes to court, enters the hall of Charlemagne's palace, observes Tomillos cheating the King at a game of chess, points out the fraud, and eventually strikes the false player dead. He then discovers his own lineage, and is the means of restoring his parents to their former rank. There is a peculiar felicity in the date of the day on which the father of Montesinos shows Paris to his son,* which was the day of St. Juan, after whom, as well as in honour of Juan Grijalva, the discoverer, St. Juan de Ulua had been named.

The Montesinos of Romance.

It is a fancy of mine that Cortes unconsciously

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* "Á veinte y cuatro de Junio,
Dia era de san Juan,
Padre y hijo paseando
De la ermita se van."

*Romances Caballerescos*, núm. 28. DEPPING'S *Romancero Castellano.*

betrayed a little of his own character, in naming the Paladin Roldan as his hero. The crafty and valorous exploits of that knight are well described in a romance, which makes him have no scruple in allowing his beloved Donna Anna to suppose that he is slain, in order that he might have his revenge upon the Knights of the Round Table; and where, disguised as a Moor, he takes the command of an army of Moors, in order to betray them.*

Cortes not unlike the Paladin Roldan.

At San Juan de Ulua, Cortes met with a friendly reception from the natives; and immediately after his arrival, there came some Indians, sent by the Governor and Captain-General of that province, to enquire, on the part of their King, Montezuma, why Cortes had made his appearance on that coast. The Spanish Commander replied, that he had come to treat with their Prince upon matters of great importance, and he

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* See the romance beginning—

" Dia era de san Jorge,
Dia de gran festividad.
Aquel dia por mas honor
Los doce se van á armar."

*Romances Caballerescos*, núm. 12. DEPPING, *Romancero Castellano.*

His interview with Montezuma's officers.

asked to see these officers. They accordingly came the next day to see him. Their mode of showing honour to Cortes was very singular. One of them burned incense before him, and also little straws touched with his own blood. Then they listened to his story, that the cause of his coming was to treat with their master on the part of Don Charles of Austria, Monarch of the East,—and they made him rich presents; but they entirely put aside any hope of his being allowed to see their Sovereign. Cortes replied, that kings always received ambassadors, and that he was resolved not to quit the country without seeing Montezuma. At this declaration, they were so alarmed, that they offered to send to their Monarch for an answer; and, as these officers of Montezuma were accompanied by skilful painters, who depicted with accuracy all that they saw amongst the Spaniards, they were able to convey a full representation of what had occurred to their Monarch.

Mexican Painters.

The alert mind of Cortes, anxious to adopt every opportunity for impressing the Mexicans (that was the name of the people over whom Montezuma ruled) with a sense of his power,

prepared a review for the officers of the King, and an additional subject for the artists. He ordered the cannon to be heavily charged, and all his horsemen, under the command of Pedro de Alvarado, to prepare for exercise. The horses were to have on their poitrals, with bells attached to them. "If we could have a charge upon the sand-hills," he said, "it would be good; but they will see that we sink into the mire. Let us repair to the shore when the tide is going out, and make a charge there, going two abreast." This cavalry movement was accordingly executed in presence of Montezuma's officers. Then came the principal show of the day. The cannon were discharged, and the stone-balls went re-echoing over the hills* with a great noise, which was the

A review in the presence of Montezuma's officers.

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* This is an instance of a considerable difficulty which occurs from a double meaning of a Spanish word. "El monte" means a "wood," and also a "mountain," or "hill;" and frequently it requires the minutest knowledge of geography to know how the word should be rendered. In the present instance the passage is *iban las piedras por los montes retumbando con gran ruido.*—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 38. From the nature of the coast, I have adopted the rendering in the text, though not without some doubts as to its propriety.

better heard, as it happened to be a calm day. All these things were represented by the Mexican painters as best they could; and never, perhaps, in the history of the world, was there brought to a monarch such a picture of the destruction that impended over his kingdom. The awful writing in the hall of Belshazzar was not more significant than this picture would have been to Montezuma, could he rightly have appreciated all that it depicted.

After an entertainment which Cortes gave to these officers of Montezuma, he had another conversation with them through his interpreters, Geronimo de Aguilar and Donna Marina, in the course of which he asked if the Mexican King had any gold, and being answered in the affirmative, he said, "Let him send it me, for I and my companions have a complaint, a disease of the heart, which is cured by gold."

An answer came back from Montezuma, in seven days, and was brought by Teotlili, one of the officers who had before met Cortes. He brought with him magnificent presents from the King, and, amongst other things, a sun of gold, which he laid before Cortes, informing him that

Montezuma sent these things to show how he estimated the friendship of that king (Charles the Fifth), but in the present state of affairs, it was "not convenient" to allow Cortes to present himself at the Mexican court. Certainly, from the official style of this reply, we may conjecture that the Mexicans had reached a high state of what is called civilization.

Montezuma declines to receive Cortes.

Cortes received the presents with all due deference; but said that it would be impossible for him to desist from his undertaking. The honour of his King forbade it. This he said so angrily, that the officers of Montezuma offered to send again to their Sovereign for instructions, and they did so. Meanwhile, Cortes despatched Francisco de Montejo, accompanied by the celebrated pilot Anton Alaminos, to seek a port that might be a better station for them than the present one, which was a barren and desert place vexed by mosquitoes. They returned with the intelligence that they had found a port twelve leagues off, close to a fortress named Chiahuitzla.

Cortes perseveres.

Montezuma resolved not to receive these strangers; and a more peremptory answer than

Montezuma again refuses.

the last, but accompanied, as it had been, wit
presents, was conveyed by Teotlili to Cortes. I
happened to be evening time, when the Spanis
Commander was about to reply to this secon
message, and the Ave Maria bell was heard fro
that vessel in the squadron which served as
church. The Spaniards fell on their knees to pra
Teotlili enquired from Marina what this mean
and Cortes thought it a good occasion to commen
the work of conversion, which, to do him justic
was always in his mind. For this purpose h
brought forward Father Bartolomé de Olmed
who endeavoured to give Teotlili some insig
into the mysteries of the Catholic Faith, and in
the nature of his own idolatry. Then Cort
continued the discourse, intimating that conve
sion was one of the chief objects of his Sovereig
and that, having come so far on such a gre
affair from so mighty a king, he must perseve
in his attempt. The Mexican ambassador,
much anger and confusion, broke off the co
ference.

Cortes persists.

The next morning there were no Indians
assist the Spaniards and to bring them food. T
friends of the Governor Velazquez murmur

against Cortes, and Diego de Ordaz told him that the army was averse to proceeding, and that the means at his disposal were not sufficient for the conquest of such an empire as Montezuma's. Cortes replied by dwelling on the success which had hitherto attended the expedition; but admitted, that if the soldiers were so disheartened as Ordaz asserted, it would be madness to attempt such an enterprise, and that they must consider about their return to Cuba. He, accordingly, published an order for the return of the fleet to that island.

Proclamation for return to Cuba.

It must not be supposed that Cortes took this important step without having thoroughly prepared for it, by sounding his chief partizans as to the course they were inclined to take, and, probably, conveying to them his own wishes. The way in which the camp was split into two factions, and the underhand negotiations that went on, cannot be better seen and appreciated than by the short account which Bernal Diaz gives of what happened to himself. "One night, a little after midnight, came to my hut Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero, Juan de Escalante, and Francisco de Lugo (Lugo and I were, in some

The partizans of Cortes combine.

sort, relations, and from the same country), an they said to me: 'Señor Bernal Diaz del Cas tillo, come hither with your arms to go th rounds, for we will accompany Cortes, who making the rounds.' And when I was at som little distance from the hut, they said to me 'Look, Señor; keep secret for a little time th which we are going to tell you, for it is of muc importance, and your companions in the hut mu not hear it, who are of the faction of Diego V lazquez.' And what they said to me was th following: 'Does it seem good to you, Seño that Hernando Cortes should have brought us a

They confer with Bernal Diaz secretly at night.

here under a delusion, and given out proclam tions in Cuba that he was coming to make settlement, and now we have learnt that he h no authority for that, but only for trading; a they wish (the change of person may here noted) that we should return to Santiago with the gold that has been taken, in which case should all be ruined men, and Diego Velazqu would take the gold as he did before?'"

They then reminded Bernal Diaz that he h been three times in that land and had gain nothing, and they ended their address to him

uggesting that they should agree to form a settle-
nent in the name of His Majesty, the Emperor;
hat they should elect Cortes as Captain; and in-
orm His Majesty of what they had done.

It was not possible that these private dealings
ould go on unobserved by the opposite faction.
A camp is not a cabinet, and secrets leak out even
rom a cabinet. The followers of Velazquez pro-
ested against such underhand proceedings; but
heir protestations were too late. When the
roclamation for return was made known to the
oldiers, most of them became furious with Cortes,
nd declared that they would not go back to Cuba.
t was remembered how ill Grijalva had been
eceived by Velazquez, because he had returned
ithout founding any settlement. Prepared to
tter such complaints as they were fairly entitled
o make, they came into the presence of Cortes.
his crafty leader had his followers now exactly
the temper in which he must have desired,
nd which he had schemed to evoke. He
fected a difficulty in acceding to their wishes;
nd the tone which he adopted on the occasion
well described, by one who heard him, in the
ords of the sly proverb, "You may entreat me

Cortes is pleased to be persuaded by his men.

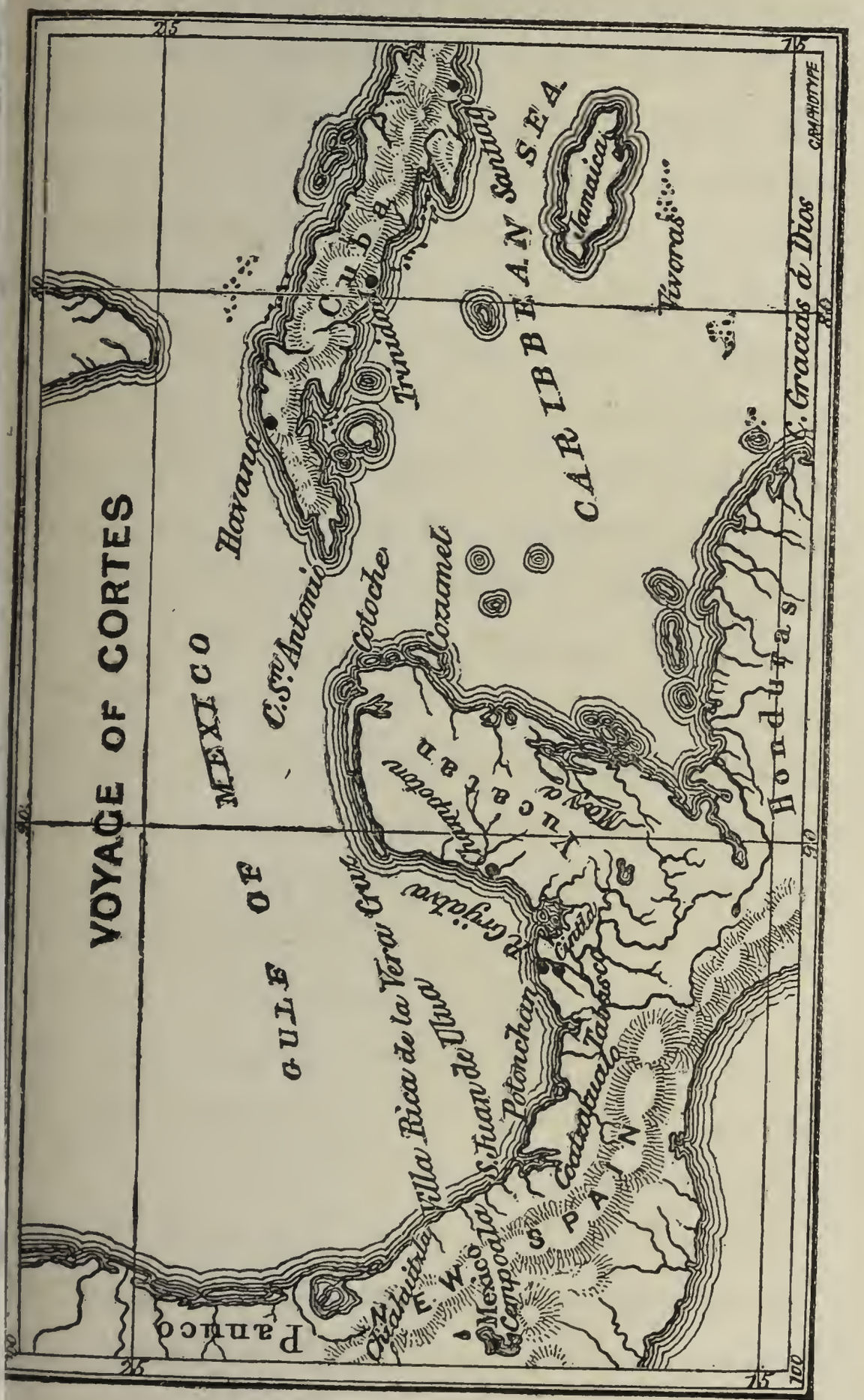
to do that which I like to do" (*tu me lo ruegas, yo me lo quiero*). A speech has been made fo him* which probably does not differ much i substance from that which he really uttered He tells the clamorous malcontents of his havin been informed that it was their desire to retur home: to please them he had yielded; but h was glad to find them in a disposition more fittin for the service of their King and the duty o good Spaniards. However, as he did not wish t have unwilling soldiers, it must now be unde stood, that whoever desired to return to Cub could do so, and that he would provide for th embarkation of all those who would not volun tarily partake his fortunes.

Just at this period, or a little before, whe Cortes and his companions were feeling somewha desolate and disheartened, there came messenger from the chief of a neighbouring territory, calle Cempoala, desiring the friendship of the Spaniard The town of Cempoala was on the way to Chia huitzla, that port of which Cortes had heard fro

The Chief of Cempoala invites Cortes.

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* De Solis, "Conquista de la Nueva-España," lib. i cap. 6.


VOYAGE OF CORTES
MEXICO
GULF OF
CARIBBEAN SEA
Havana
Cuba
Trinidad
Jamaica
Vivorat
C. St. Antonio
Cotoche
Coxumel
Yucatan
Honduras
S. Gracias á Dios
Campeachy
Tabasco
Guatimala
Panuco
Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz
S. Juan de Ulua
Mexico
Acapulco
Guatulco
Realejo
Nicaragua
Panama
Porto Bello
Carthagena
Rio de la Hacha
Maracaibo
Coro
Margarita
Cumana
Trinidad
Jamaica
Santiago
Cuba
Havana
C. St. Antonio
Cotoche
Coxumel
Yucatan
Campeachy
Tabasco
Guatimala
Honduras
S. Gracias á Dios

those he had sent out to discover one. A proceeding now took place which deserves the attention of the world at the present day, and which many a modern nation might well imitate in its attempts to colonize. Cortes began to take steps for founding his town,—not, however, by choosing a spot of ground, and commencing to build upon it, but by selecting the men who were to fill the chief offices in the town. Certainly, it would appear as if, in those ages, they had more belief in men, and appreciated more the difference of one man from another, than the world does now.

A good mode of founding a town.

Cortes had no intention of making his settlement at, or near, San Juan de Ulua, but at Chiahuitzla, where he had heard of tolerable anchorage. A Spanish town, however, was somewhat like a Roman camp: there were certain fixed points in it, and the difficulty was, not so much what should be done, as who should be appointed to do it.

Cortes first took solemn and official possession of the country in the name of the Emperor. He then named his town, which at present exists only on paper, calling it "La Villa Rica de l

Vera Cruz."* He then appointed the requisite officers. It appears, too, that either he or his party suggested, that a formal requisition should be made to him, apparently in writing, demanding in a most peremptory manner that the main object of the expedition should be changed from that of trade to that of colonization; and that he should take upon himself to appoint the *Alcaldes* and *Regidors* of the new town. The Alcaldes named were Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero (a native of Medellin, the birthplace of Cortes) and Francisco de Montejo. The Regidors were Alonso Davila, Pedro de Alvarado, with his brother Alonso, and Gonzalo de Sandoval, also a native of Medellin, a young man of twenty-two, who will afterwards take a great part in the conquest, and who was much beloved by Cortes. Juan de Escalante was appointed the *Alguazil Mayor*. Cristoval de Olid was to be the Master of the Camp (*el Maestro del Campo*). There were other minor appointments which need not be recorded. These appointments were, no doubt, skilfully

Change of plan in the Expedition.

Cortes names the chief officers of Vera Cruz.

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* "Porque el Viérnes de la Cruz havia entrado en aella Tierra."—GOMARA, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, 30.

made by Cortes, affording due encouragement to his friends, and offering the requisite temptation to those amongst his enemies who might be gained over.

The foundations for authority were now laid and we must own that the deficiency of original authority was endeavoured to be supplied in the most skilful manner. Recounting the various steps in due order, we find that it was voted universally, or at least determined by the majority that the object of the expedition, as stated in the original instructions (of the purport of which they had not been aware), must be entirely changed and accordingly that these instructions did not apply to the changed circumstances. Then, the process may be summed up as follows: Cortes rises from the mass as their chosen leader; and at their request, appoints officers. When these are appointed, he recognizes their authority to the utmost extent. He appears bare-headed before them, and renounces his authority of Captain General and Justicia-Mayor, placing it in the hands of the *Alcaldes* and *Regidors*. He then leaves the assembled officers of government to confer amongst themselves. They, as might be

The process by which authority is brought into due form and shape.

expected, resolve upon reappointing him; and the next morning come to him, to make their determination formally known,—which intelligence he receives with proper official gravity, as if it were something new to him.* He is pleased to accept the appointment; and they are allowed to kiss the hands of the new Captain-General and Justicia-Mayor, who is thus placed, with some show of legality, at the head of the military and the civil services.

Cortes re-appointed as Captain-general and Justicia-mayor.

In the midst of all these proceedings, Cortes had not forgotten the friendly invitation which he had received from the Cacique of Cempoala; and, indeed, he is stated to have made use of this invitation as an argument to show that there were alliances which might be formed against the Mexicans, and people with whom he might negotiate, when he had once made a settlement.†

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* "El Dia siguiente, de mañana, el Regimiento fué buscar á Hernando Cortés, el qual, como si nada upiera de el caso, preguntó, qué era lo que mandaban?" -Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. II. lib. v. cap. 7.

† "I aun tambien para desde allí poder con mas cilidad tener amistad, í Contratacion, con algunos idios, í Pueblos Comarcanos, como era Cempoallan, í

Nothing, therefore, could be more fortunate than this offer of welcome from Cempoala, which Cortes did not fail in due time to embrace; and, marching to their town, was very kindly received. Thence he moved on to Chiahuitzla, still in the same territory, where also he was well received by order of the Cacique of Cempoala. Near to Chiahuitzla, Cortes, working with his own hands, founded his town of Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz;* and the appointed officers took charge of it. This town was of much importance to Cortes: it was a stronghold in the rear, and Juan de Escalante, who had the chief command, was a devoted friend, on whom Cortes could rely.

Cortes enters Cempoala.

Begins to build Vera Cruz.

The town being now founded, it was resolved,

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otros, que havia Contrarios, í Enemigos, de la Gente de Motecçuma." — Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 30.

* See the proceedings (mentioned in Gomara, cap. 37, and incidentally confirmed by Chimalpain and Bustamante, cap. 35) in reference to the actual building of the town, when sites were marked out for the church, the grand square, the town hall, the wharf, and the shambles and the town was called Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, *as they had agreed when the Council of St. Juan de Ulua was nominated* (como havian acordado, quando se nombró el Cabildo de San Juan de Ulhua).

in full council, that information should be sent to Charles the Fifth of what had been done; and the

Sends messengers to Spain.




wo alcaldes, Alonso Hernandez de Puertocarrero nd Francisco de Montejo, were chosen for this urpose. They went to Spain, carrying rich ifts with them, but unfortunately found the Emeror absent, and were ill received by the Bishop f Burgos, the head of the colonial administration, ho favoured Velazquez, and considered these essengers as persons who had been concerned in revolt against the constituted authorities.

Discovers a conspiracy, and punishes the conspirators.

Meanwhile, Cortes did not hesitate to use his newly-acquired authority with vigour, and discovering a conspiracy which was formed by some of the party of Velazquez to leave the army, and to give information to that Governor which might enable him to seize the messengers of Cortes on their way to Spain, he caused two of the principal conspirators to be put to death, and inflicted minor punishments upon the others. "I remember," says Bernal Diaz, "that when Cortes signed that sentence, he said with deep sighs and signs of suffering, 'Oh! who would not be ignorant of writing, so that he might not have to sign the death warrants of men.'" *

Resolves to destroy his fleet.

It was during his stay in the territory of Cempoala, that Cortes adopted that determination to destroy his fleet, and so to cut off all means of retreat from his army, which has become one of the great texts in history. I say "adopted," because though Cortes himself may have originated the idea of destroying the fleet, and then

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* "Acuérdome, que quando Cortés firmó aquella sentencia dixo con grandes suspiros y sentimiento: O quién no supiera escrivir, para no firmar muertes de hombres!" —Bernal Diaz, cap. 57.

have insinuated it into the minds of his adherents,* it is certain that they also counselled the destruction of the fleet. There were many good reasons for this counsel. It was necessary to bind the two factions together in some indissoluble manner. Again, in such a small body, where every man was valuable, the sailors were an important addition to the little army. Even those who were disabled men, or unsuited for a marching expedition, sufficed for garrison duty in the new town of Vera Cruz. The magnanimity of the transaction is diminished by its evident policy; and with regard to Cortes himself, it required no extraordinary valour on his part. He had cut off all retreat for himself when he refused to allow himself to be superseded by the orders of Velazquez. For Cæsar to pass the Rubicon might have been a great resolve, but for his soldiers, nothing: in the destruction of this Spanish fleet, the men incurred a danger which their Commander had already brought upon himself, and

Obvious motives for destroying the fleet.

* "Platicando con Cortés en las cosas de la guerra, y amino para adelante, de plática en plática le aconsejámos os que eramos sus amigos, que no dexasse navío en el uerto ninguno."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 58.

thus reduced themselves to the level of his own desperation. Juan de Escalante was entrusted with the execution of the orders that Cortes gave for the fleet's destruction, which, after the anchors, sails, and cables had been taken out, was summarily effected.

Cortes continued to maintain a strict amity with the Cempoalans; it was in an expedition that the Spaniards made, while in this territory, that he caused a man to be hanged for stealing two fowls. The man was cut down, however, when half dead, by Alvarado.

Cortes frees the Cempoalans from tribute to Mexico.

While Cortes was in Cempoala, Montezuma's collectors of tribute came into the country. The Cempoalans complained much of the Mexican king's exactions, saying that he demanded their children for slaves and for sacrifices. Cortes seized the officers, and ordered that no tribute should be paid. But, privately, he let two of them go free with a peaceful message to Montezuma, and the others he preserved from the fury of the Cempoalans, who, when they had overcome their terror of the great King's officers, by seeing them imprisoned, were very desirous to turn the tables

upon these Mexicans, and to offer them up as a sacrifice to the local divinities.

This is one of many instances which show the vigour and crafty wisdom of Cortes, in his preparations for the conquest of Mexico. Indeed, his conduct at this period of his fortunes might be taken as a model by all those who may be placed in similar circumstances. As a snake through tangled grass and herbage, or rather, like an agile wild beast through the forest, now lightly leaping over the brushwood, now bounding along the open space under great trees, always with an eye to prey, always with a soft footfall, so did the politic Cortes move through the difficulties which beset his position,—the conspiracies of dubious followers, the snares of uncertain allies, the perils of an unknown country, and the weight of countless numbers brought to bear upon his little band, which was but the scenic counterfeit of an army.

The policy of Cortes.

These sacrifices of human beings, which the Mexicans and the Cempoalans were so ready to inflict upon each other, were an abomination to Cortes; and he resolved to put an end to them in his province, and, indeed, to the whole scheme of

Cortes attacks idolatry in Cempoala.

idolatry of the Cempoalans; which he accomplished by main force, sending a body of troops to hurl the idols down from the temple. The use of violence, if ever justifiable in matters of religion, is so in warring against a cruel creed which has for its groundwork the fears of men, and is perpetually cemented by the blood of the weak amongst its worshippers. It was not, however, to be supposed that a people who had been oppressed by a malign religion for so many years would part with their burden easily. The most galling fetters come to be believed in as amulets, mistaken for ornaments, and fondly clung to as supports. Accordingly, the Cempoalans rushed to arms, that they might avenge this insult to their gods. But Cortes, whose Violence, being for the most part the violence of the head, was never far removed from her severe, but serene sister, Policy, took the precaution at once to seize upon the Cacique and the principal chiefs, and to declare that they should be put to death if any outrage was attempted against the Spaniards. The threat was successful; and the people were pacified, or rather awed into submission. Cortes then had the walls of the temple cleared of

Cempoalans take up arms for their gods.

lood. He erected an altar there, changed he priests' vestments from black to white, and ave *them* the charge of this altar. He also set p a cross, and taught the natives to make wax andles, and to keep them burning before the ltar.

The next step of Cortes was to receive the empoalans into the vassalage of the King of pain. Certainly this man's audacity throughout orders upon the ludicrous; and the way in hich the strange tale was first told, in grave fficial documents, does not diminish to an intelgent reader the grotesque wildness of the transctions, though narrated as if they were mere atters of course.

On the 16th of August, 1519, Cortes set off r Mexico, resolved to see, in the quaint language the unsuspected historian who accompanied him, what sort of a thing the great Montezuma was* whom they had heard so much."

Cortes commences his march to Mexico, August 16, 1519.

Cortes himself had already assured his Sovegn that he would take Montezuma, dead or

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* "Que seria bueno ir á ver que cosa era el gran ontеçuma."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 53.

alive, if he did not bring him into vassalage to the Spanish crown.*

This is not the place for giving any more than a very rapid account of the advance of Cortes; but, previously to his great battles with the Mexicans or their subjects, it will be advisable to show what were the advantages which each side possessed.

Comparative means of the belligerents.

The Mexicans had immense superiority in point of numbers. They were not, like the Indians of the islands, a people living in huts, but in good, stone-built edifices. They formed a mighty kingdom, mighty at least in appearance, with dependent states, that paid tribute to the King of Mexico, but which, as soon appeared, were by no means devoted to him. The weapons of the Mexicans were lances, darts, bows and arrows,†

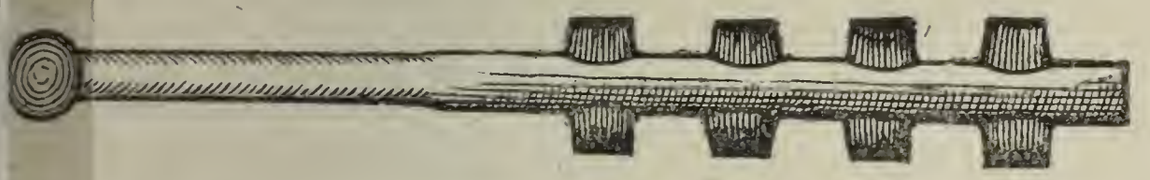
Weapons of the Mexicans.

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* "En la otra Relacion, * * * certifiqué á Vuestra Alteza, que lo habría preso ó muerto, ó Súbdito, á la Corona Real de Vuestra Magestad."—LORENZANA, p. 39.

† "It was usual for a number of archers to assemble together, and throw up an ear of maize into the air, at which they immediately shot with such quickness and dexterity, that before it could reach the ground it was stripped of every grain."—CLAVIGERO'S *History of Mexico*, book vii. p. 367—note.

slings and stones, and a kind of sword of a most fearful nature and aspect.*



I have recounted the means on the Mexican side, which consisted of innumerable men, who

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* "The *Maquahuitl*, called by the Spaniards *Spada*, or sword, as it was the weapon among the Mexicans which was equivalent to the sword of the old continent, was a stout stick, three feet and a half long, and about four inches broad, armed on each side with a sort of razors of the stone *itzli* (obsidian), extraordinarily sharp, fixed and firmly fastened to the stick with gum-lac, which were about three inches long, one or two inches broad, and as thick as the blade of our ancient swords. This weapon was so keen, that once it entirely beheaded a horse at one stroke, according to the affirmation of Acosta; but the first stroke only was to be feared; for the razors became soon blunt. They tied this weapon by a string to their arm, lest they might lose it in any violent conflict."—Clavigero, *Hist. of Mexico*, bk. vii. p. 367. These are the words of Acosta: "Sus armas eran unas navajas agudas de pedernales puestas de una parte y de otra de un baston, y era esta arma tan furiosa, que afirman que de un golpe echavan con ella la cabeça de un cavallo abaxo cortando toda la cerviz."—*Hist. Nat. y Moral de las Indias*, lib. vi. cap. 26.—The engraving in the text is a representation of this formidable weapon.

as it proved afterwards, possessed a fierce an pertinacious bravery like that of the Jews weapons of offence which would not have bee contemptible anywhere in a previous age, bu which were becoming so amongst Europeans i the sixteenth century;* a consolidated kingdom of which the capital at any rate was devoted t its sovereign, and substantial edifices.†

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* On the other hand, their defensive armour was good though not to be compared to that of the Spaniards.

† Lord Macaulay, in his "Essay on Lord Clive," says, that "the victories of Cortes had been gained ove savages who had no letters, who were ignorant of th use of metals, who had not broken in a single anima to labour, who wielded no better weapons than thos which could be made out of sticks, flints, and fish-bones who regarded a horse-soldier as a monster, half mar and half beast, who took an arquebusier for a sorcerer able to scatter the thunder and lightning of the skies."

These weapons, however, could hardly have been as contemptible as they are thus represented, for we find that, at the first discharge of missiles in the first battle with Cortes, the Indians wounded seventy men, two of them fatally. Neither is it much to their discredit, that they did not break in animals to labour, as there were none for them to break in. Now that they possess horses, there are no people in the world more expert with them, as may be seen in the case of those who make use of the

The means which Cortes had at his command.

On his side Cortes had valiant captains, trained men-at-arms, a small park of artillery, these wonderful horses, and his own dissembling mind and vast audacity—cut off from all retreat. The difficulties, however, in his own camp, which his uncertain position created for him, were very great; and his enterprise, considered in all respects, was, perhaps, as difficult as any feat of arms the world has ever contemplated.

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lasso. Had the Mexicans possessed horses in those days, there would not have been the slightest chance for the Spaniards, unless they had come in large armies, in which case the difficulty of finding supplies would have been almost an insuperable obstacle.

# CHAPTER III.

*Cortes marches to Tlascala—Great battle with the Tlas calans—The Tlascalan senate allies itself to Cortes— Cortes enters Cholula—The Great Massacre there— First sight of Mexico—Cortes enters Mexico—Descriptio of the City.*

Cortes marches on towards Tlascala.

THE next step which Cortes took was t march towards the territory of Tlascala His friends at Cempoala had informe him that the people of that territory were friend of theirs, and very especial enemies (*muy capitale enemigos*) of Montezuma. The Tlascalan form of government was republican, and Cortes com pares it to those of Genoa, Venice, and Pisa.

Form of the Tlascalan govern-ment.

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* "La órden que hasta ahora se ha alcanzado, que l gente de ella tiene en gobernarse, es casi como la Señorías de Venecia, y Génova, ó Pisa; porque no ha Señor general de todos."—Lorenzana, p. 59.

Before his approach, he sent four Cempoalans to the senate of Tlascala, telling the senate that he was coming through their country on his way to Mexico, that he had freed the Cempoalans from Montezuma's yoke, and that he wished to know what grievance the senate had against the Mexicans, that he might make the Tlascalan cause his own. Such, at least, was the substance of what Cortes wrote to the Tlascalans.

Message of Cortes.

The Tlascalan senate received this crafty message, or whatever part the ambassadors (who probably spoke on behalf of their own nation) chose to report of it, and proceeded to debate upon the subject. One great chief advised friendship with the Spaniards, as being a race more like gods than men, who would force their way even if the Tlascalans should oppose them. It would be wise, therefore, to accept their friendship, and to make alliance with them against the common enemy, Montezuma. These arguments he strengthened by appeals to omens and prophecies. Another senator said that the Spaniards were like some monstrous beasts cast upon the sea-shore. He rightly put aside the omens, on account of their

Debate in the Senate.

Magiscatzin's counsel.

Xicotencatl's counsel.

incertitude. He probably appealed to what the Spaniards had already done—mentioned their demands for gold; and, no doubt, if he were aware of it, described the indignities they had offered to the gods of the country,—undoubted deities in his eyes, whatever the new comers might be.*

The Tlascalans resolve on war.

His voice was for war: and such was the decision of the assembly,—as indeed might have been expected from the chiefs of a nation so jealous of interference that they had denied themselves the use of salt, because it came from Montezuma's country, and they were unwilling to have more intercourse with the Mexicans than they could help.

Notwithstanding the opposition to be expected from the Tlascalans, Cortes persevered in making his entrance into their country, and had to fight his way thither. After three or four severe engagements, in one of which, he tells us, he had to

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* I will not by any means be answerable for the exactitude of these speeches. There are more elaborate ones given in Torquemada, Herrera, and Clavigero,—all manifestly proceeding from one source, and tinged, I think, with a Spanish colour. I have no doubt, however, that great speeches were made on the occasion.

encounter one hundred and forty-nine thousand adversaries, "who covered the whole country,"* he at last succeeded in bringing the Tlascalans to terms. But this object was not attained before the Tlascalan General (Xicotencatl) had made great efforts, by craft as well as force, to overcome the Spaniards. It may a little diminish the surprise of the reader, at such extraordinary numbers being met and vanquished by the small army of Cortes, to find that they attacked in battalions of only 20,000 men.† An incident worth recording occurred when the Tlascalans sent certain spies to the camp of Cortes. These spies, forty in number, had a pretext for their coming, for they brought provisions to the camp, and certain victims (four miserable old women) for sacrifice. When the forty spies arrived, they began to sprinkle incense upon Cortes, and then they explained their embassage in the following words:

Cortes brings them to terms.

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* "Que cubrian toda la tierra."—LORENZANA, p. 52.

† "Heureusement pour Cortez, les Tlaxcaltèques ne les attaquèrent pas tous à la fois, mais par bataillons de vingt mille hommes qui se succédaient les uns aux autres à mesure qu'ils étaient repoussés."—IXTLILXOCHITL, *Hist. des Chichimèques*, chap. 83.

"Our Captain Xicotencatl sends you this present, which, if you are *teules*,* as those of Cempoala say, you will eat, and if you wish sacrifices, take these four women and sacrifice them, and you can eat of their flesh and their hearts. We have not hitherto sacrificed before you, as we did not know your manner of sacrifice. And if you are men, eat of these fowls and bread and fruit. If, however, you are benignant *teules*, we bring you incense and parrots' feathers; make your sacrifice with these things." Cortes replied, that it was not the custom of the Spaniards to put any one to death for sacrifice; and, besides, as long as the Tlascalans made war upon him, there were enough of them to slay. Afterwards, discovering that these messengers were spies, he most inhumanly, as I think, cut off the thumbs or hands of seventeen of them, and sent them back, thus maimed, to their Captain. At last messengers of peace did come from the Tlascalans; and their desire for alliance with Cortes must in no respect have been diminished by the arrival, about this

The Tlascalan spies bring food and a sacrifice.

* Minor deities.—"Nos tenian por Teules, que son como sus idolos."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 72.

time, of ambassadors from Montezuma, who came bringing presents, and offering, as Cortes declares in his letter to Charles the Fifth, vassalage on the part of Montezuma to that Monarch.




The things most to be noted, in the march of Cortes from Cempoala to Tlascala, are the populousness and signs of civilization which he meets with, and his own vigorous sagacity. At one point of his march he comes upon a valley*

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* The valley of Yztacmastitán.

Populousness of a district through which Cortes passes.

where, for four successive leagues, there was a continuous line of houses; and the Lord of the valley lived in a fortress such as was not to be found in the half of Spain, surrounded by walls and barbacans and moats.* He also came upon

The great wall of Tlascala.

the great wall of Tlascala, which was nine feet high, and twenty feet broad, with a battlement a foot and a half in breadth. This wall was six miles long, and had an entrance constructed like a European ravelin of that day.†

Cortes not to be dismayed by omens.

The vigorous sagacity of Cortes was shown in his resolution to listen to no bad omen, con-

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* "El Señorío de este, serán tres, ó quatro leguas de poblacion, sin salir Casa de Casa, por lo llano del Valle, Ribera de un Rio pequeño, que vá por él: y en un Cerro muy alto está la Casa del Señor, con la mejor Fortaleza que hay en la mitad de España, y mejor cercada de Muro, y Barbacanas, y Cabas."—Lorenzana, p. 48.

† "É á la salida del dicho Valle, fallé una gran Cerca de piedra seca, tan alta como estado, y medio, que atravesaba todo el Valle de la una Sierra á la otra, y tan ancha como veinte piés: y por toda ella un Petril de pié, y medio de ancho, para pelear desde encima: y no mas de una entrada tan ancha como diez pasos, y en esta entrada doblaba la una Cerca sobre la otra á manera de Rebelin, tan estrecho como quarenta pasos."—Lorenzana, p. 49.

sidering, as he says, that God is above Nature*— in not being dismayed by the faint-heartedness of some of his companions, whom he overhears declaring that he is mad, and that they will return without him,—and in the ready craft with which he penetrates and defeats the plans of the Tlascalans, who thought to surprise him by a night attack.

The Tlascalans endeavoured to set Cortes against the Mexicans: the Mexican ambassadors did all they could to make him distrust the Tlascalans. It was a situation eminently suited to the genius of that crafty conqueror. He says, it gave him much pleasure to see their discord, for it seemed to further his design; he recollected the saying in the Scriptures, that "a kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation;" and was also fortified by the secular proverb, "From the wood comes the man who is to burn it."† "In secret," he adds, "I thanked

The diplomacy of Cortes.

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* "É aunque todos los de mi Compañía decían, que me tornasse, porque era mala señal, todavia seguí mi camino, considerando, que Dios es sobre natura."—LORENZANA, p. 54.

† "Del monte sale quien el monte quema."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. xxxiii. cap. 4.

each party for the advice which they offered me, and gave each of them credit (*i. e.*, in words) for more friendship towards me than the other."*

Cortes enters Tlascala, Sept. 18.

Meanwhile, with the consent, and, indeed, upon the entreaty, of the Tlascalan chiefs, he had entered the town of Tlascala on the 18th of September, 1520. The word Tlascala signifies bread, or anything made of bread.† He was received with every demonstration of affection and regard by the Tlascalans. Their priests, as he entered the town, sprinkled incense upon him and his soldiers. As, however, they were repulsive-looking creatures, with matted hair,‡ from which dripped blood (their own blood, for they were in the habit of piercing their ears, their lips, and

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* "Aun acordéme de una autoridad Evangélica, que dice: *Omne Regnum in seipsum divisum desolabitur*: y con los unos, y con los otros mancaba, y á cada uno en secreto le agradecía el aviso, que me daba, y le daba crédito de mas amistad que al otro."—LORENZANA, p. 61.

† "Tlaxcallan, quiere decir Pan Coçido, ó cosa de Pan"—GOMARA, *Crónica*, cap. 55.

‡ "Los cabellos muy largos y enredados, que no se pueden desparcir, sino se cortan, y llenos de sangre, que les salian de las orejas, que en aquel dia se avian sacrificado."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 75

their tongues with the thorns of the *maguey*,* their incensing must have been much more of a horror than a pleasure, and it must have been a great relief to have seen the hideous priests ile off, and the Indian girls approach, bearing ittle pyramids of roses, which they offered to he principal captains. When the Tlascalans ought the Spanish General's friendship, they old him what struggles they had always made o maintain their independence. They had, how-ver, fought him by night, and fought him by ay, and had been compelled to confess their in-eriority. When they had once confessed this to im, and had sought his friendship, it seems as if ıey had thoroughly thrown aside all enmity, ıd meant to abide by the friendly words they ttered.

Favourable reception of Cortes.

Their town was worthy of the intelligence of

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* "Era frequente, e d'ogni giorno, l'effusion di sangue alcuni Sacerdoti, ed a questi davano il nome di *amacazqui*. Pungevansi colle acutissime spine del aguei, e foravansi parecchie parti del corpo, massima-nte l'orecchie, le labbra, la lingua, e la polpa delle mbe, e delle braccia."—CLAVIGERO, *Storia Antica del ssico*, tom. ii. lib. vi. p. 52.

its inhabitants. Cortes says that it was much larger and much stronger than Granada, and contained far more people* than that town at the time of the Moorish Conquest. There was a daily market, frequented by thirty thousand persons: which could boast, among its wares, of gold, silver, precious stones, earthenware equal to the best in Spain at that time, wood, charcoal, and medicines. As a proof of the civilization of the Tlascalans we may notice that they had public baths. Their houses were built of bricks, sun-burnt and kiln-burnt, or of stone, according to the means of the builder. These houses were large, but not lofty and had terraces upon the roofs. The Tlascalans had not arrived at that advanced stage in the art of building, which is indicated by the existence of doors; but they used matting instead, which was adorned with bells made of metal or sea-shells,† that gave due notice of entrance and exit.

The town and market of Tlascala.

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* It was afterwards ascertained that in the province of Tlascala there were 500,000 heads of families —"Hay en esta Provincia por visitacion, que yo en ella mandé hacer, quinientos mil Vecinos."—LORENZANA, p. 60.

† "Las Casas de Terrado, ó de Açotea de Vigas, tablaçon, hechas de Adoves, Ladrillo, í de Cal, í Canto

The government was committed to four chiefs, who depended on the senate, and each of whom ruled a quarter of the city, which appears to have been strictly governed.

Almost the only transaction of Cortes at Tlascala of which we have a clear account, serves to illustrate his untiring zeal for religion. The Tlascalan chiefs thought they could not welcome these resplendent strangers better, or secure their friendship more certainly, than by presenting their daughters to them as wives. Upon this occasion, Cortes, whose religious zeal had already been restrained by Father de Olmedo, took the opportunity of explaining the Christian Faith to the Tlascalans, and endeavoured to make it a condition that if these Indian ladies were received as wives, the Tlascalans should quit their idolatry,

Cortes endeavours to convert the Tlascalans.

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mo cada uno bodia: no usaban altos, sino paxos, í las mui grandes, de estraña hechura: tampoco Puertas, ni Ventanas, sino Esteras, hechas de Carriço, estiças, que se quitaban, í ponian, í colgados en ellas cascaveles de Cobre, í de Oro, ó de otros Metales, í de conchas Marinas, para que hiciesen ruido, quando se quitaban, ó abrian, í cerraban."—HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. II. lib. vi. cap. 12.

and worship the true God. The chiefs remon strated against such a proceeding, and intimate that their people would die sooner than cease t sacrifice to their gods. Upon this, Father de O medo again interfered. He said that it would no be right to make them Christians by force. Tha what had been done in Cempoala, in throwin down the idols there, was against his judgmen and that such things were useless until the In dians should have some knowledge of the tru Faith. "What was the good," he remarked, "o taking away the idols from one temple, whe they would set up similar ones immediately i another?"* He relied upon a conversion whic required more time and milder means. Such wa the substance of what Father de Olmedo saic anticipating, perhaps, that Cortes would not hes tate to take extreme measures in carrying ou a point which he had so much at heart. The ad vice of the good Father, much in advance of th temper of his time, and indeed of our time too seems to have prevailed in this instance; and th work of conversion to Christianity was left t

The missionary zeal of Cortes restrained by Father de Olmedo.

* See Bernal Diaz, cap. 76.

he truly Christian methods of reasoning and ersuasion. A conversation is given by a modern istorian, which a certain Tlascalan lord, named Iagisca, the one who in the senate had advocated eace with the Spaniards, held with Cortes on he subject of religion. He perceived, he said, hat the Spaniards had something like a sacrifice, ut yet there was no victim; and the Tlascalans could not imagine how there was to be a sacrice unless some one should die for the safety the rest."* Then, again, though willing to lmit that the God of the Spaniards was a very eat God, greater than his own gods, he yet aintained that each god had power in his own untry, and that many gods were necessary, one ainst tempests, another for harvests, a third for ir.† In short, the Tlascalans were firm in their

A discourse between Cortes and Magisca on religion.

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* "Ni sabian que pudiese haber Sacrificio sin que riese alguno por la salud de los demás."—De Solis, *nquista de la Nueva-España*, lib. iii. cap. 3. I do not ow what authority De Solis had for this conversation; the remarks of Magisca have some air of verisimide.

† The Tlascalans were much astonished to find that Spaniards worshipped (so they interpreted it) a cross. établit dans la grande salle du palais de Xicotencatl

idolatry. They were willing, however, to give way in a temporal matter which Cortes had very early proposed to them, namely, to become vassals of the King of Spain. But we may safely conclude, that they understood but little of what they undertook to do when they gave this promise of vassalage.

The Tlascalans become vassals of the King of Spain.

After staying twenty days in Tlascala, Cortes, accompanied by some thousands of his Tlascalan allies, proceeded on his way to Mexico. He had been much solicited by Montezuma's ambassadors to come to Cholula and await their master's response in that town. The Tlascalans, on the other hand, had warned him of some treacherous intent on the part of the Cholulans and of the Mexican ambassadors.

Cortes, however, marched on Cholula, but met with a cold and uncertain reception there. It

Cortes proceeds to Cholula.

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un oratoire avec une croix et une image de Notre-Dame où l'on dit la messe presque tous les jours; il fit placer avec une grande solennité une autre croix dans la salle où il recevait le sénat. Les Tlaxcaltèques étaient très étonnés de voir que les Espagnols adoraient le Dieu qu'ils appelaient Tonacaquahuitl ou l'arbre de la nourriture."—Ixtlilxochitl, *Histoire des Chichimèques*, chap. 84. Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*.

was a grand town. Bernal Diaz thus describes it. "It had, at that time, above a hundred very




ofty towers, which were adoratories, where stood heir idols; and I remember," he adds, "that, vhen we entered that city, and beheld such lofty owers glistening in the sun, it seemed like Valla-olid." Cortes gives a still more favourable ac-ount of Cholula. "It is a more beautiful city rom without than any in Spain, for it is many-owered and lies in a plain. And I certify to Your Highness that I counted from a mosque

His description of Cholula.

there four hundred other mosques, and as many towers, and all of them towers of mosques. It is the city most fit for Spaniards to live in of any that I have seen here, for it has some untilled ground (meads) and water, so that cattle might be bred, a thing which no other of the cities that we have seen possesses; for such is the multitude of people who dwell in these parts that there is not a hand-breadth of ground which is not cultivated."* Here Cortes found other messengers from Montezuma, but these did not come apparently with any message to Cortes, but to prepare an ambuscade by which twenty thousand Mexican troops were to fall upon the Spaniards in the streets of Cholula. This scheme was betrayed to Donna Marina by a Cholulan woman; the Tlascalans had also suspected it, and Bernal Diaz says that he remarked that the Cholulans withdrew from them with a mysterious kind of sneer on their faces. Cortes seized on two or three of the Cholulans, who confessed the plot, laying the blame on Montezuma. Calling his

Mexican ambuscade.

Treachery of the Cholulans.

* "Es tanta la multitud de la Gente, que en estas Partes mora, que ni un palmo de Tierra hay, queno esté labrada."—LORENZANA, p. 67.

men together, Cortes informed them of the danger, and of his intention to punish the Cholulans. To the townspeople he pretended that he was about to set off the next morning, for which purpose he required food, attendants for the baggage, and two thousand men of war. These they agreed to furnish him. On the next morning he mounted his horse, summoned the Cholulan caciques round him, informed them that he had discovered their treachery, and then commenced an attack upon them. He had placed a guard in the outer court of the building where he was lodged, to prevent escape. A musket was fired as a signal; and then the Spanish soldiers set upon the unfortunate Cholulans in a way, which, as Bernal Diaz says, they would for ever remember, "for we slew many of them, and others were burnt alive; so little did the promises of their false gods avail them."*

Massacre of the Cholulans.

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* Las Casas, in a work, the only one of his which has been much circulated in the world, gives an unfair account of the massacre of Cholula, entirely ignoring the treachery of the Cholulans, which, or rather the belief in which, was the sole cause of the massacre; whereas he makes the motive of Cortes to have been a

Cortes had the Cholulans now completely at his mercy: he appointed a new Cacique, the former one having been slain in the massacre; addressed the priests and chiefs on the subject of religion; destroyed the cages full of men and boys fattening for sacrifice; and, but for Father de Olmedo's remonstrances, he would have pulled down and broken to pieces the idols, but he contented himself with erecting an altar and a cross.

Cortes marches on to Mexico.

Meanwhile, the twenty thousand Mexicans returned to Mexico, bringing the unwelcome news to their Monarch of the failure of the enterprise: and Cortes, quitting Cholula, marched on with much circumspection, "the beard always on the shoulder,"* towards the capital.

First view of the great valley of Mexico.

It was when they had advanced about eight leagues from Cholula, in the gorge between two lofty mountains, that Cortes and his little army,

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wish to spread terror. "Acordaron los Españoles de hazer alli una matança, ó castigo (como ellos dizen) para poner, y sembrar su temor, é braveza en todos los rincones de aquellas tierras."—*Brevissima Relacion de la destruycion de las Indias*, p. 17. Sevilla, año. 1552.

* "Andavamos la barba sobre el ombro."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 86.

looking northwards, first saw before them the great valley of Mexico, with the lakes, the central city, and the smaller tributary towns in the neighbourhood. Historians have made much of this first view of Mexico, forgetting how little thought a busied captain and a band of fortune-seeking adventurers have to bestow upon what is picturesque and beautiful. Besides, it is the parting, and not the coming glance, which discovers the full beauty of any scene in nature; or, at least, makes men inclined to linger upon it. But Cortes was hurrying on to conquest, with a mind occupied by fanaticism, ambition, and that which is dearer than all to men who aspire to command, namely, a wish to be right in what they have once determined upon. He, therefore, tells with a coolness, which forms a ludicrous contrast to the glowing descriptions of historians, of his first beholding the territory of Montezuma.*

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* "Otro dia siguiente subí al Puerto por entre las dos Sierras, que hé dicho, y á la bajada de él, ya que la tierra de el dicho Muteczuma descubríamos por una Provincia de ella, que se dice Chalco."—*Carta de Relacion de* D. FERNANDO CORTES. LORENZANA, *Hist. de Nueva-España*, p. 72.

Thoughts of the common soldiers on first seeing Mexico.

The common soldiers are represented to have been divided in their opinions upon what they beheld. The more resolute amongst them, looking down upon the wondrous cities of that vast plain, thought of the booty it contained, and recollected a well-known proverb, "The more Moors, the more spoil."* Those who were inclined to prudence, considering the populousness of which they beheld so many signs, thought it was a temptation of Providence for such a handful of men to enter so mighty a kingdom.

Montezuma's messengers fail to stay Cortes.

At the place where Cortes rested after his descent, he found messengers from Montezuma, who sought to dissuade him, by the pretended difficulties of the way, from entering further into the great King's territories. They also offered bribes.† The resolute Cortes replied with courtesy; alleged his duty to the King of Spain to proceed; and passed on.

There is a tale, which comes from Mexican sources, that Montezuma bethought him now of

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* "Mas Moros, mas ganancia."

† "Concertarian de me dar en cado año, *certum quid*."— LORENZANA, p. 73.

staying the advance of the Spaniards by means of his wizards and his necromancers. He sent a number of them forth, that by their incantations and their wizardries they might enchant his enemies to their destruction. It may readily be conjectured that these wise men were too careful of their lives to adventure within the Spanish camp; but the story they told was, that they met a man in the way, "he seemed like an Indian of Chalco; he seemed like one that is drunk;" and that this man threatened and scorned them. "What does Montezuma intend to do?" he exclaimed. "Is it now that he is bethinking himself of awakening; is it now that he is beginning to fear? But already there is no remedy for him; for he has caused many deaths unjustly. He has committed many injuries, treacheries, and follies." Then the soothsayers and enchanters were much afraid, and made a mound of earth as an altar for this man. But he would not sit upon it; and his wrath was only greater, and he spake again, saying, "He would never more make account of Mexico, nor have charge of that people, nor assist them. And when the soothsayers would have

Montezuma's necromancers.

answered him, they could not do so (*lit.*, there was a knot in their throats)."*

Having uttered these things, and other threats pointing to the destruction of Mexico, the seeming Chalcan vanished from their sight. Then the soothsayers perceived that they had been talking with the god Tezcatlipuk; and they returned to Montezuma, and related all that had happened to them. And when he heard it, the King was very sad and crest-fallen (*cabizbajo*), and for a time said not a word. At last, he broke out into lamentations over Mexico, deploring the fate of their old men and their old women, of their youths and of their maidens, concluding a doleful discourse by words which contain the philosophy of despair:—"We are born: let that come which must come."† And thus these soothsayers and necromancers, who had no doubt been an oppressive institution upon the Mexican kingdom, were of no avail in time of danger, unless to utter unpleasant and reproachful things, which utterances are nearly sure to be made in the days of adver-

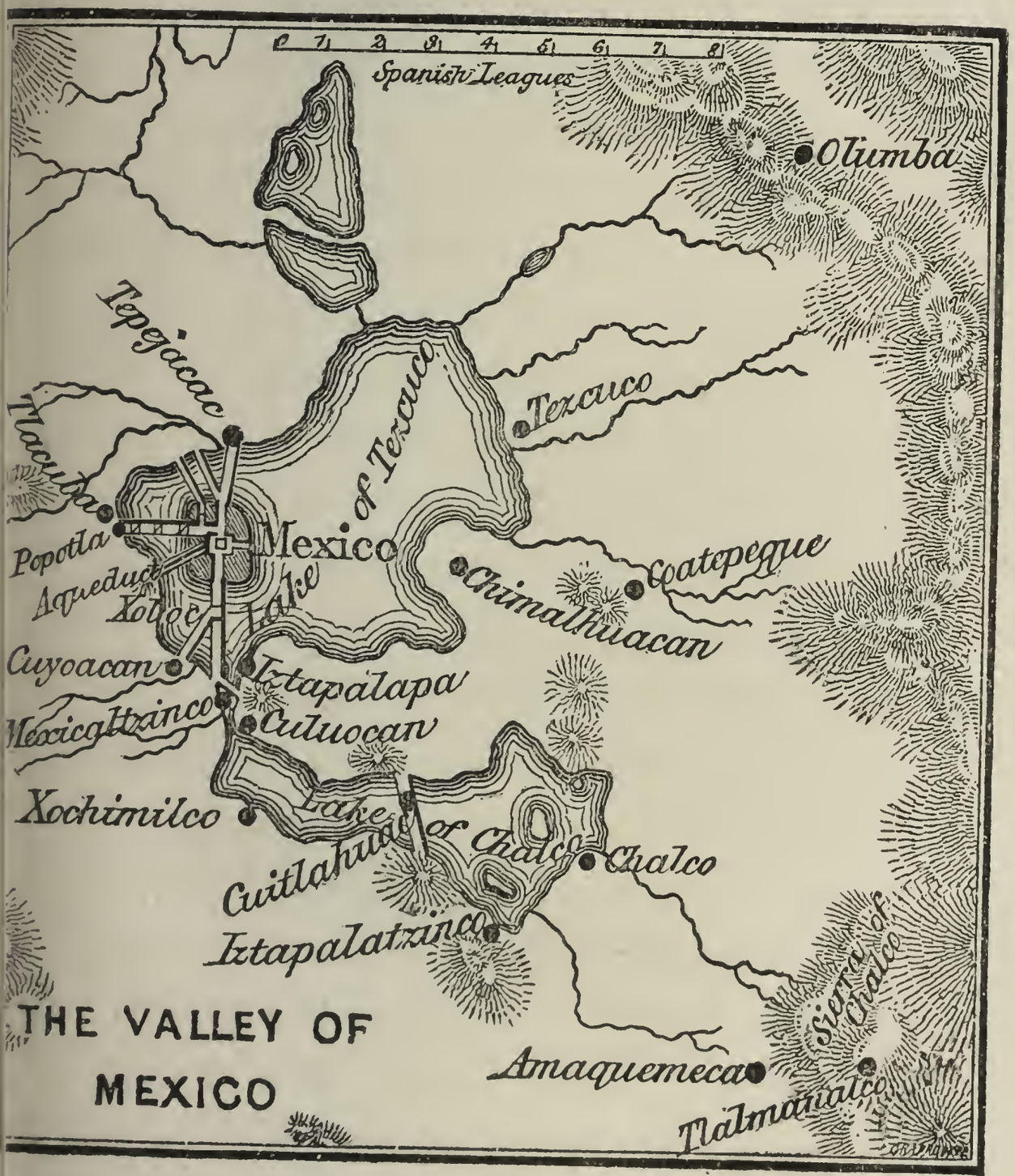
The necromancers bring back bad tidings.

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* "Hizoseles un nudo en la garganta."

† "Nacidos somos: venga lo que viniere."

sity, without the aid of soothsaying or necromancy.*




* This story is to be found, more fully narrated, in the "Historia Universal de las cosas de Nueva-España" of Bernardino de Sahagun, lib. xii. cap. 13, Kingsborough's Collection.

The march of Cortes.

The next place that Cortes reached was Amaquemeca; and staying there for the night, he was well received, and found officers of Montezuma, who had been sent to see that the Spanish army was adequately provided for.

Cortes at Iztapalatzinco.

At Iztapalatzinco, on the border of the Lake of Chalco, where Cortes rested on the following day, an embassage, headed by the King of Tezcuco, Montezuma's nephew, made a last effort to detain the adventurous Spaniard. But neither the excuses which they made, nor the threats which they held out, sufficed to delay the march of Cortes for a single hour.

As these ambassadors returned to Mexico, Cortes followed in their rear, passing through an exquisite little town, "with well-built houses and towers" rising out of the water, named Cuitlahuac, situated in the centre of a causeway that divided the Lake of Chalco. After being sumptuously regaled at Cuitlahuac, Cortes set off for Iztapalapa, a little town belonging to Cuitlahuatzin, a brother of Montezuma.* It was in this day's jour-

At Cuitlahuac.

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* Iztapalapa is derived from *Yxtatl*, the Mexican word for salt. "Yxtapalapa, que quiere decir Pueblos donde

ney, and when they had reached the broad causeway that forms the beginning of the highway from that town to Mexico, that the full beauty of the city and its magnificent environs burst upon their sight. I have said before, that a troop of men hastening to make their fortunes, are not in the humour to be entranced by natural scenery. But here was a scene at which the most disciplined soldier would not wait for the word of command to halt, but would stop short of his own accord, as if he had suddenly come into some realm of enchantment. Bernal Diaz exclaims, "And when we saw from thence so many cities and towns rising up from the water, and other populous places situated on the terra-firma, and that causeway, straight as a carpenter's level, which went into Mexico, we remained astonished, and said to one another that it appeared like the enchanted castles which they tell of in the book of Amadis, by reason of the great towers, temples, and edifices which there were in the water, and all of them work of masonry. Some, even, of our soldiers asked, if

The first near sight of Mexico.

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se coge Sal, ó Yxtatl; y aun hoy tienen este mismo oficio los de Yxtapalapa."—LORENZANA, p. 56, note.

this that they saw was not a thing in a dream."* The beauty of the sight seems to have had an exhilarating effect, for there is not a word said of the danger which these enchanted towers and palaces might portend. Their General, however, had been very wary throughout his route from Cholula, and an historian remarks of his conduct during this journey, that his vigilance was always beyond his thoughts,† by which is meant that his caution in action exceeded even his apprehensiveness in thought.

Cortes at Iztapalapa.

At Iztapalapa Cortes rested for a night, previously to entering Mexico. In recounting any other journey, the traveller, or even the historian, would pause to relate the beauties and the delights of Iztapalapa. The common soldier, Bernal Diaz, says that he was never tired of beholding the diversity of trees, the raised terraces, the flower-gardens traversed by large canoes, and adorned with beautiful frescoes.‡

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* Bernal Diaz, cap. 87.

† "Mas cómo yban sobre aviso, y el general era tan aperçebido que siempre se hallaba adelante de sus pensamientos."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. xxxiii. cap. 5.

‡ "No me hartava de mirallo, y ver la diversidad de

The next day Cortes entered Mexico.

Cortes enters Mexico. Nov. 8, 1519.

Who shall describe Mexico—the Mexico of that age? It ought to be one who had seen all the wonders of the world; and he should have for an audience those who had dwelt in Venice and Constantinople, who had looked down upon Granada from the Alhambra, and who had studied all that remains to be seen, or known, of the hundred-gated Thebes, of Babylon, and of Nineveh.

The especial attributes of the most beautiful cities in the world were here conjoined; and that which was the sole boast of many a world-renowned name, formed but one of the charms of this enchantress among cities. Well might the rude Spanish soldier find no parallel but in the imaginations of his favourite Romance.* Like Granada, encircled, but not frowned upon, by

Description of Mexico.

árboles, y los olores que cada uno tenia, y andenes llenos de rosas y flores, y muchos frutales, y rosales de la tierra, y un estanque de agua dulce: y otra cosa de ver, que podrian entrar, en el vergel grandes canoas desde la laguna, por una abertura que tenia hecha sin saltar en tierra, y todo mui encalado, y luzido de muchas maneras de piedras y pinturas en ellas."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 87.

* "Amadis de Gaul."

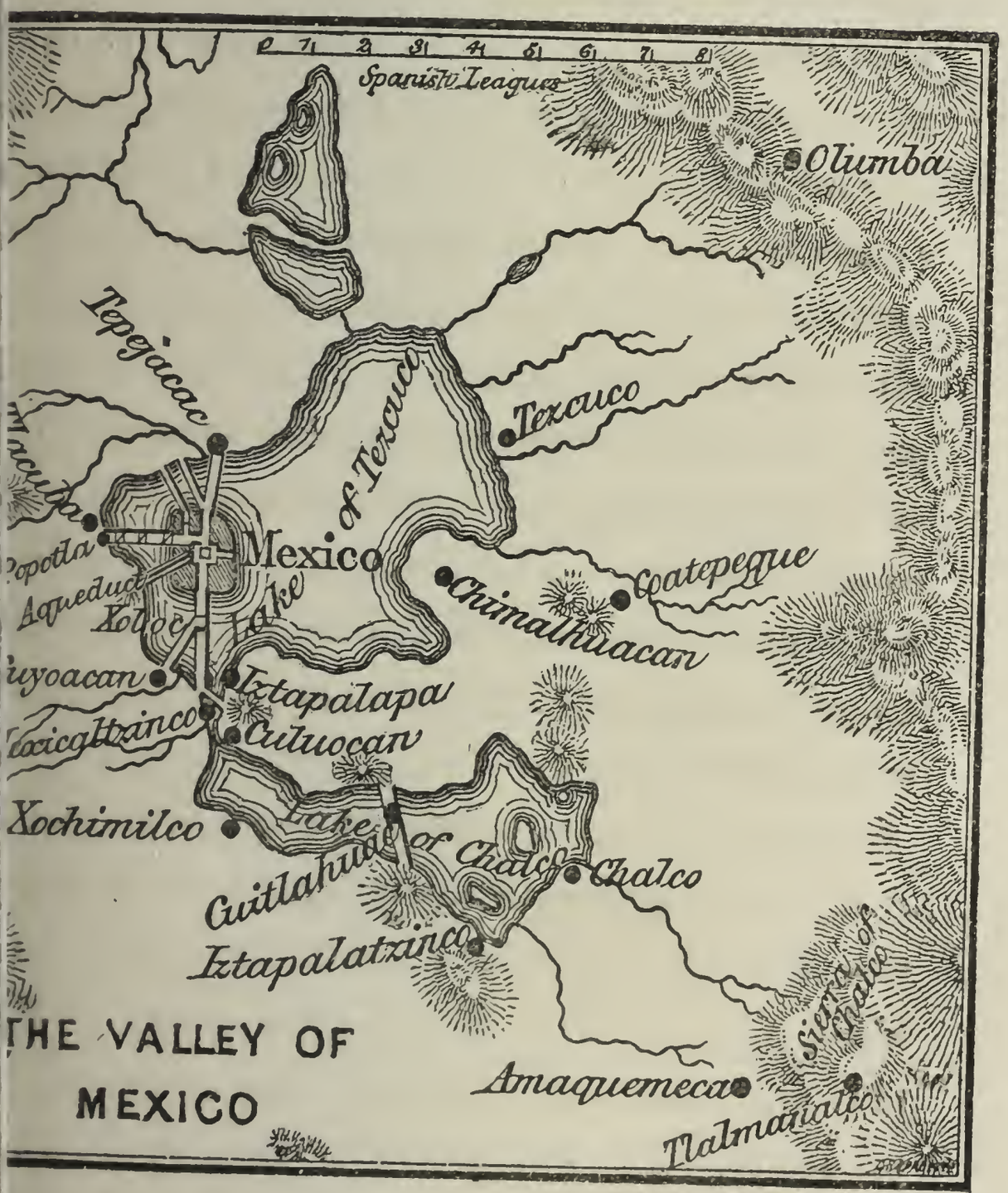
mountains; fondled and adorned by water, like Venice; as grand in its buildings as Babylon of old; and rich with gardens, like Damascus;—the great city of Mexico was at that time the fairest in the world, and has never since been equalled. Like some rare woman, of choicest parentage, the descendant of two royal houses far apart, who joins the soft, subtle, graceful beauty of the South, to the fair, blue-eyed, blushing beauty of the North, and sits enthroned in the hearts of all beholders,—so sat Mexico upon the waters, with a diadem of gleaming towers, a fair expanse of flowery meadows on her breast, a circle of mountains as her zone: and, not unwomanlike, rejoicing in the reflection of her beautiful self from the innumerable mirrors which were framed by her streets, her courts, her palaces, and her temples.

Mexico very beautiful, even when seen closely.

Neither was hers a beauty, like that of many cities, which gratifies the eye at a distance; but which diminishes at each advancing step of the beholder, until it absolutely degenerates into squalidity. She was beautiful when seen from afar; she still maintained her beauty, when narrowly examined by the impartial and scrupulous traveller. She was the city not only of a

great king, but of an industrious and thriving people.

If we descend into details, we shall see that




the above description is not fanciful nor exaggerated. Mexico was situated in a great salt lake,

communicating with a fresh-water lake. It was approached by three principal causeways of great breadth, constructed of solid masonry, which, to use the picturesque language of the Spaniards, were two lances in breadth. The length of one of these causeways was two leagues, and that of another, a league and a half; and these two ample causeways united in the middle of the city, where stood the great temple. At the ends of these causeways were wooden draw-bridges, so that communication could be cut off between the causeways and the town, which would thus become a citadel. There was also an aqueduct which communicated with the main land, consisting of two separate lines of work in masonry, in order that if one should need repair, the supply of water for the city might not be interrupted.

The aqueduct.

Construction of the streets.

The streets were the most various in construction that have ever been seen in any city in the world. Some were of dry land, others wholly of water; and others, again, had pathways of pavement, while in the centre there was room for boats.* The foot-passengers could talk with

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* "Les autres étaient à moitié garnies d'une terre

those in the boats.* It may be noticed that a city so constructed requires a circumspect and polite population.

Palaces are common-place things to describe; but the abodes of the Mexican kings were not like the petty palaces of Northern princes. One of the most observant of those Spaniards, who first saw these wonders, speaks of a palace of Montezuma's in which there was a room where three thousand persons could be well accommodated, and on the terrace-like roof of which a splendid tournament might have been given.† Montezuma's palace.

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argileuse, battue, qui faisait l'effet d'un pavé en brique; l'autre moitié était remplie d'eau; les habitants peuvent circuler sur la terre ou bien sur l'eau dans leurs barques." —*Relation sur la Nouvelle-Espagne*, chap. 17. TERNAUX-COMPANS, *Voyages*. (*Relatione d'alcune cose della Nuova Spagna e della gran città di Temistitan Messicò*. Fatta per un gentil'huomo del Signor Fernando Cortese. RAMUSIO, tom. iii.)

* The boats that plied in and about Mexico were estimated at fifty thousand in number.

† "On voyait dans une de ces résidences un salon assez vaste pour que trois mille personnes pussent y tenir sans être gênées. Ce palais était si vaste, que sur la terrasse qui le couvrait on aurait pu donner un tournois où trente cavaliers se seraient exercés aussi

The market-place.

There was a market-place twice as large as that of the city of Salamanca, surrounded with porticos in which there was room for fifty thousand people to buy and sell.

The great temple.

The great temple of the city maintained its due proportion of magnificence. In the plan of the city of Mexico, which is to be found in a very early edition of the Letters of Cortes, published at Nuremberg,* and which is supposed to be the one that Cortes sent to Charles the Fifth, I observe that the space allotted to the temple is twenty times as great as that allotted to the market-place. Indeed, the sacred enclosure was in itself a town; and Cortes, who seldom stops in his terrible narrative to indulge in praise or in needless description, says that no human tongue could explain the grandeur and the peculiarities

The enclosure of the great temple.

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facilement que sur la grande place d'une ville."—*Relation sur la Nouvelle-Espagne*, chap. 20. TERNAUX-COMPANS, *Voyages.*

* See Stevens's "American Bibliographer," under the head of "Cortes." A facsimile of the plan is inserted in that valuable work, from which the one given in this book is taken. It has also been compared with the original in the British Museum.

of this temple.* Cortes uses the word "temple," but it might rather be called a sacred city, as it contained many temples, and the abodes of all the priests and virgins who ministered at them, also a university, and an arsenal. It was enclosed by lofty stone walls, and was entered by four portals, surmounted by bastions. No less than twenty† truncated pyramids of solid masonry, faced with a polished surface of white cement that shone like silver in the sun, rose up from within that enclosure. High over them all towered the great temple dedicated to the god of war. This, like the rest, was a truncated pyramid, with ledges round it, and with two small towers upon the summit, in which were placed the images of the great god of war (Huitzilopochtli) and of the principal deity of all (Tezcatlipuk), the Mexican Jupiter. It is sad to own that an en-

A sacred city.

* "Entre estas Mezquitas hay una, que es la principal, que no hay lengua humana, que sepa explicar la grandeza, y particularidades de ella: porque es tan grande, que dentro del circuito de ella, que es todo cercado de Muro muy alto, se podia muy bien facer una Villa de quinientos Vecinos."—Lorenzana, p. 105.

† Cortes says forty; but I prefer abiding by the words of "the Anonymous Conqueror."

trance into these fair-seeming buildings would have gone far to dissipate the admiration which a traveller—if we may imagine one preceding Cortes—would, up to this moment, have felt for Mexico. The temples and palaces, the polished, glistening towers, the aviaries, the terraces, the gardens on the house-tops (many-coloured, for they were not like those at Damascus, where only the rose and the jasmine are to be seen); in a word, the bright, lively and lovely city would have been forgotten in the vast disgust that would have filled the mind of the beholder, when he saw the foul, blood-besmeared idols, with the palpitating hearts of that day's victims lying before them, and the black-clothed, filthy, unkempt priests ministering to these hideous compositions of paste* and human blood. "Let the stern Cortes enter," is the cry which the amazed spectator would have uttered, when he

The temple foul within.

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* "Elles étaient composées de la réunion de toutes les plantes dont ils se nourrissent, ils les enduisaient de sang de cœur humain ('Le impastavano con sangue di cuori d'huomini.'—Ramusio); voilà de quelle matière leurs dieux étaient faits."—*Relation sur la Nouvelle-Espagne*, chap. 12. Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*.

saw these horrors, and thought of the armed men who were coming to destroy them. And yet this conjunction, which was to be met with at Mexico, of beauty and horror, is no new thing, and something very like it may be discovered in other guise throughout the world! Civilization side by side with utter barbarism! Such is the contrast to be found in the present age too; and such, perhaps, in each of ourselves. And so, with some feeling of pity, even for a nation of cruel and bloodthirsty idolaters, we may contemplate the arrival of the Avenger as he makes his entry into Mexico.

If any one should think that the foregoing apology for the Mexican barbarities is overtrained, let him imagine, for a moment, that Christianity had arisen in the New instead of the Old World; that some Peruvian Columbus had led the way, from West to East, across the Atlantic; and that American missionaries had come to Rome, in the first century of the Christian era. Honoured by the Emperor as ambassadors from some "barbarian" power, and taken in his suite to the Coliseum, with what intense disgust and consternation would these pious men have regarded

Worse savages in the Coliseum at Rome than in the great temple of Mexico.

all that they saw there. They would have seen men torn in pieces by wild beasts, not for anything so respectable as superstition, but simply to minister to that most vile and morbid of pleasurable excitements which is to be derived from witnessing (ourselves in safety) the struggles and the agonies of others. "These spectators are indeed savages," they would have exclaimed: "and behold, there are women, too, amongst them! No longer beautiful, in our eyes, are the golden palaces, the marble colonnades, and the countless images, admirably sculptured, which we find amongst these barbarous Roman people. Let us hasten to convert them."

But the Old World has always been proud of its Rome, and has spoken of its Romans as the masters of civilization.



# CHAPTER IV.

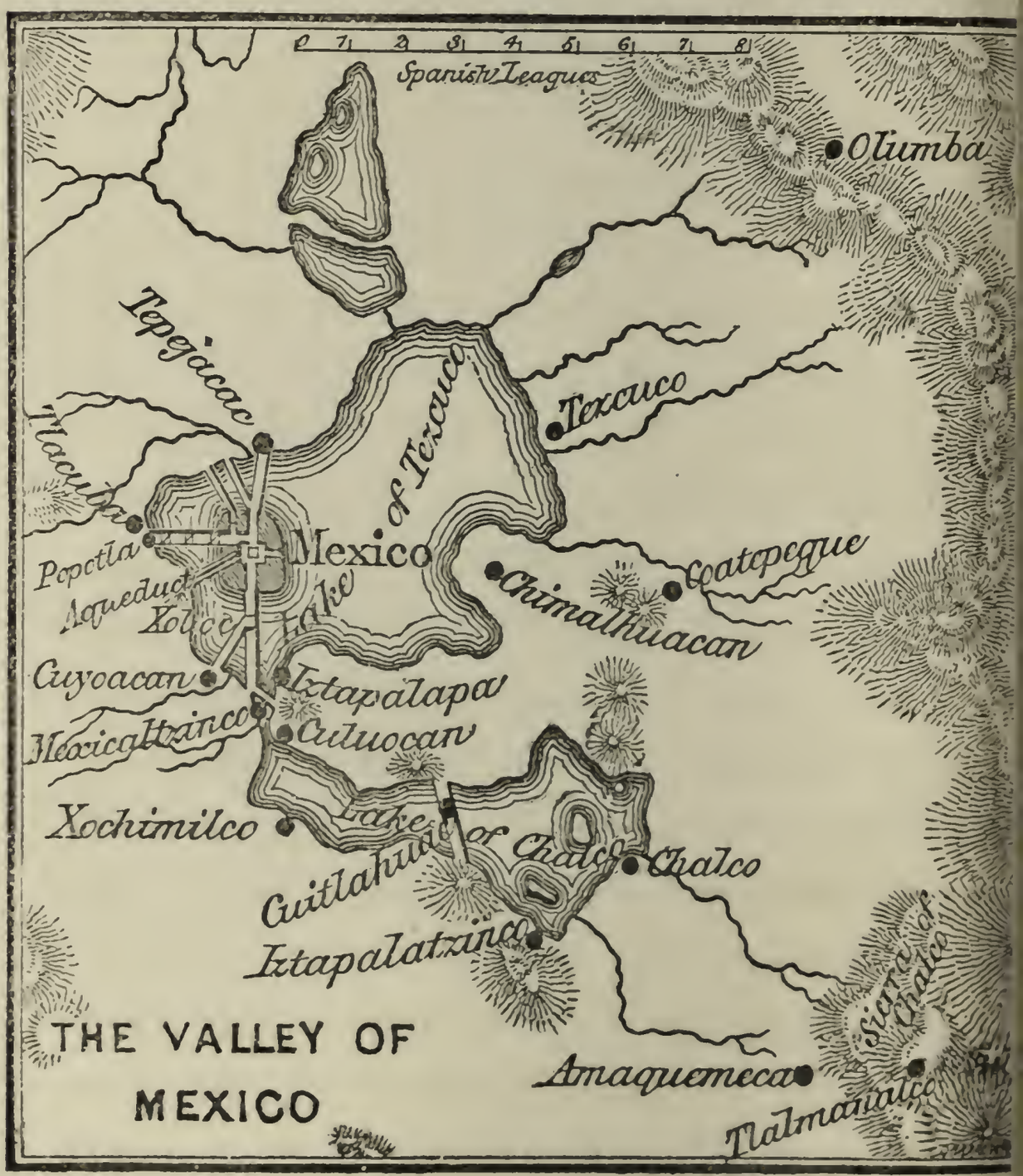
*Interviews between Cories and Montezuma—Cortes visits the Great Temple—The Mexican Idolatry.*

Reception of Cortes by Montezuma.

THE route by which Cortes entered Mexico was along the great causeway which led from Iztapalapa. As he approached the city, he was met by a thousand Mexican nobles richly clad, who, after the fashion of their country, saluted him by laying their hands in the dust, and then kissing them. This ceremony, as it was performed by each one separately, occupied more than an hour. Cortes then passed over the drawbridge which led into the city, and was received there by Montezuma. The monarch had been borne from the city in a rich litter, but when he approached the bridge, he descended to receive Cortes, being supported on the arms of his brother and his nephew, the Kings of

Monte-zuma's dress.

Tezcuco and Iztapalapa. A gorgeous pall, of which the ground-work was either green feathers, or




made to represent green feathers, was exquisitely adorned with pendent embroidery of gold, silver, pearls, and precious stones. This pall, or canopy,

was held over him by four great lords. He wore a mantle rich with gold and precious stones; on his head a mitred diadem of gold, and on his feet golden sandals,* richly embossed, "after the manner of the ancients." The subordinate Kings were bare-footed, though dressed in other respects as magnificently as Montezuma. The Spanish General descended from his horse and would have embraced the Mexican Monarch. But this gesture did not accord with the notions of reverence entertained by the Mexicans for their kings; and Cortes was prevented from executing this friendly but familiar intention of his. They interchanged presents, however, Cortes throwing upon Montezuma's neck a collar made (somewhat significantly) of false pearls and diamonds; while Montezuma, as they went further on, gave the Spanish General two collars made of shells which the Mexicans valued much, each collar being adorned with eight golden pendants in the form of craw-fish, admirably wrought. The pro-

Cortes and Montezuma exchange presents.

* "Traìa unos Çapatos de Oro, i Piedras engastadas, que solamente eran las Suelas prendidas con Correas, como se pintan à lo antiguo."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 65. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. ii.

cession then moved on with all due pomp into the town, for the stately Spaniard was the man of the Old World who understood pomp nearly as well as any of these despots of the New World. The eyes of the beholders, familiar with the aspect of gold and jewels, were doubtless fixed upon the wondrous animals that came foaming and caracolling along. Behind them all rode Death, but no one saw him.

Mexico, being such a city as I have described, was pre-eminently adapted for the display of a great concourse of human beings. By land and by water, on the towers, on the temples, at all heights of those truncated pyramids, were clustered human beings to gaze upon the strangers. The crowds that came to see the Spaniards made the spectacle very grand, but did not add to their sense of security. Indeed, as they marched along this narrow causeway, intersected by various bridges, of which they well knew the use that might be made in war, they must have felt, as one of them owns he did feel, considerable apprehension. The wary counsel that had been given to them by the Tlascalans and the other

Apprehensions of the Spaniards.

enemies of Montezuma, was sure on this occasion to be present to the minds of some of them; but, no doubt, they all marched on with soldierly composure to the quarters which Montezuma had prepared for them. These were in the palace of his father, a previous sovereign of Mexico. Having conducted the Spaniards thither, he left them to refresh themselves after the fatigues of their journey.

The memorable day on which Cortes and his companions entered Mexico was the 8th of November, 1519. Their number was about four hundred and fifty. In a time of extraordinary festivity, they would have formed but a poor and mean sacrifice to have been offered to the Mexican gods. On the other hand the very least number at which the population of Mexico can be estimated is three hundred thousand, and I conceive it to have been much larger.* Population of Mexico.

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* "Torquemada affirms, that the population of the capital amounted to one hundred and twenty thousand houses; but the Anonymous Conqueror, Gomara, Herrera, and other historians, agree in the number of sixty thousand houses, not that of sixty thousand inhabitants, as Robertson says; for no ancient author computed them

The course of history amongst people, who have the same general ideas, the same religion, and who are not far removed from each other in civilization, is apt to be somewhat monotonous, and sadly to perplex the memories of children and other unfortunate persons, who have to give an account of what they read. But when the men

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so few in number. It is true that in the Italian translation of the relation of the Anonymous Conqueror we read *sessante mila abitanti;* but this has been, without doubt, a mistake of the translator, who having, perhaps, found in the original *sesenta mil vecinos*, translated it sixty thousand *abitanti*, when he ought to have said *fuochi*; because, otherwise, Cholula, Xochimilco, Iztapalapa, and other such cities would be made greater than Mexico. But in the above mentioned number the suburbs are not included. It appears that Torquemada included the suburbs, but still his calculation appears excessive."—CLAVIGERO, *History of Mexico*, English translation, book ix. p. 72—note.

This error of reckoning the heads of families as the whole population requires to be much guarded against in early American history. Even M. Humboldt is said to have fallen into it. See *Antigüedades Peruanas*, p. 65. It is certain that *vecinos* does not in this instance mean individual neighbours, but the heads of neighbouring families. We often use the word "neighbour" in the same sense.

of one hemisphere meet the men of another, after having been separated for unknown centuries, the simplest affair between them is in the highest degree curious; and the difficulties of the narrative, the strangeness of the names (which, however, might not be so inharmonious if we knew how to pronounce them), and whatever else may be repulsive in the story, are all overcome by the originality of the transactions. In this case, Cortes, who may very fitly represent the European commander of that age, both in his valour, his policy, and his devoutness, meets the greatest monarch of the state most advanced in civilization of the Western world; and, if we could but trust to interpreters, what an insight we should have into the history of this strange and eventful conquest.

Renewal of intercourse between the men of the New and of the Old World.

But alas! those who know how difficult a thing it is to render one European language into another, may well feel bewildered, when they have to give an account of what passed through the mouths of interpreters in languages where frequently there were no cognate ideas. Moreover, supposing the respective translations freed from mere difficulties of language, they still were

Much left to conjecture in interpreted discourse.

likely to be varied largely by the passions and the interests of the bystanders, and then to be coloured according to the personages for whom the reports of these conversations were prepared. It is necessary to bear all these difficulties in mind when considering the transactions which are now to be narrated, and the evidence upon which they rest.

Conference between Cortes and Montezuma.

After the Spaniards had dined in the palace set apart for them, Montezuma returned, and had a formal conference with Cortes. The account which the Spanish Commander gives to his Sovereign of this conference is, that Montezuma commenced by saying, that he and his subjects were descended from strangers who had come from afar into this country.* He added that their leader had returned to his own country, and that when he came again to seek his people, they declined to accompany him back, and that finally he returned alone. The Mexican nation, however,

* Observe, from Peter Martyr's account of the speech, how a statement of this kind grows.—"Ad oras magnus quidam princeps post omnium viventium memoriam, *classe vectus*, majores nostros, perduxit."—Dec. v. cap. 3.

had always supposed that the descendants of this great leader would come again, and subdue the earth; that it was probable that the great personage of whom Cortes had spoken* (Charles the Fifth) was a descendant of the first leader of the Mexicans to that country, and, consequently, their natural Lord; that he, therefore, and his people held Cortes for Lord in the place of his master, and placed all that they had at his disposal.

Improbability of part of the speech as reported.

So far the report of the speech of Montezuma seems likely to be false, or, at least, greatly overstrained. Montezuma may have sought to claim kindred with these wondrous and valorous strangers. He may have alluded to prophecies about their coming—and the concurrence of testimony on this point is very remarkable. But that he placed himself and his kingdom in this unreserved manner, in open court, as it were, at the feet of Cortes in their first interview, is in the highest degree unlikely; and we cannot but regret to find the authority for this conversation, not only in the history subsequently drawn up by the Chap-

* Not on the present occasion, but before, to Montezuma's ambassadors.

lain of Cortes, but in the letter of Cortes himself to the Emperor. What follows is probable and credible. Montezuma went on to say that he well knew that Cortes had heard from the Tlascalans and others many calumnies about him, also many exaggerations, such as that the walls of his palaces were made of gold, and that he was a god; "whereas you see," he said, "my palaces are made of stone, lime, and earth, and my flesh is like yours." He then assured them that they should be provided with all necessary things, and be under no care, just as if they were still in their own country and their own homes.

Cortes visits Montezuma.

The next day Cortes paid a visit to Montezuma. This time the conversation was not political but religious; and Cortes, insincere, crafty, and reserved, in mundane matters, seems to have compensated for all this, and to have indulged in a sincerity which bordered on rashness, in all that concerned spiritual matters. It may be doubted whether, in the annals of conquest, any conqueror can be found (except perhaps some Mohamedan one) who was more deeply imbued with the missionary spirit than was Cortes.

The Spanish Commander, already not unprac-

tised in expounding the mysteries of the Christian Faith, repeated briefly the story of Christianity; explained to Montezuma why the Spaniards worshipped the cross; condemned and scorned the Mexican idols; and informed Montezuma how these idols had given way before the cross.*

Cortes as a preacher.

From the New Testament Cortes passed to the Old Testament, spoke of the Creation, of Adam and Eve, of the universal brotherhood of man, and then said that his King, in the spirit of such brotherhood, grieving over the loss of souls, had sent the Spaniards to prevent the adoration of idols and the sacrifice of men and women. He then held out a hope that certain persons, who were of a much more saintly character than he and his men, would hereafter be sent by the King of Spain to instruct the Mexicans in these sacred things.

Montezuma now indicating a wish to speak, Cortes concluded his discourse, doubtless putting

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* "Que mirassen quan malos son, y de poca valia, que adonde tenemos puestas Cruzes, como las que vieron los Embaxadores, con temor dellas no osan parecer delante."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 90.

a restraint upon himself for so eloquent a preacher.

It brings the whole scene more vividly before us, and shows, I think, that at least we are right in concluding Religion to have been the chief, if not the only subject discussed at this interview that Cortes turned to his men and said, "We will finish with this, as it is the first touch."*

Montezuma's reply to Cortes.

"My Lord Malinché!"† replied Montezuma "I have had a perfect understanding of all the discourse and reasonings which you have addressed before now to my vassals upon the subject of your God; and also upon that of the cross; and also respecting all the other matters that you have spoken about in the *pueblos* through which you have passed. We have not responded to any of these things, for from the beginning here we have adored our gods and have held them to be good gods; and so, no doubt, are yours: do not take

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* "E díxonos Cortés á todos nosotros, que con fuimos; con esto cumplimos, por ser el primer toque.—Bernal Diaz, cap. 90.

† Malinche, from *Malintzin*, the Lord of Marina; *tzin* being a Mexican title, added to names, and corresponding to the word "Lord."

the trouble, at present, to say anything more about them to us. And, with respect to what you say about the Creation of the World, we, too, are of opinion that it was created a long time ago, and we hold it for certain that you are the persons of whom our ancestors spoke to us, who would come from where the sun rises; and to that great king of yours I am much obliged; and I will give him of that which I may have."*

The above is part of a speech recorded by Bernal Diaz, and may be taken as an unbiased account of what that honest soldier, who was present, gathered of the meaning of what passed in this memorable interview. It will be observed how inconsistent it is with the report given by

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* "No os hemos respondido á cosa ninguna dellas; porque desde abinicio acá adoramos nuestros Dioses, y os tenemos por buenos: é assí deuen ser los vuestros; no cureis mas al presente de nos hablar dellos; y en caso de la creacion del mundo, assí lo tenemos nosotros oido muchos tiempos passados: é á esta causa teneos por cierto, que sois los que nuestros antecessores os dixeron que vernian de adonde sale el Sol é á esse nuestro gran Rey yo le soy en cargo, y le daré de lo que viere."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 90.

Cortes of what took place on a former occasion. The grand and polite Montezuma might well say that he would give of what he had to this unknown, though closely-related, foreign potentate; but this is a very different thing from promising vassalage and subjection; and, yet unconquered, talking like a defeated man and a prisoner.

Montezuma asks about De Córdova and Grijalva.

Montezuma then asked some very natural questions, such as whether Hernandez de Córdova and Grijalva were of the same nation as Cortes, and being answered in the affirmative, went on to say, how happy he was to see the Spaniards at his court. If he had sought to prevent them from coming there, it was not from any wish of his to exclude them, but because his subjects were so frightened at them, saying that they threw thunder and lightning about, that they were savage deities, and follies of that sort. For his part, now that he had seen the Spaniards, his opinion of them was raised. He held them in more esteem than before, and would give them of whatever he possessed.

Rational and dignified discourse of Montezuma.

Cortes and all the Spaniards present responded with fitting courtesies; and then Montezuma smilingly, for he was a humorous man, though a

dignified one,* made the same remarks about the calumnies and exaggerations of the Tlascalans which have been quoted before.

Cortes, in his turn smiling, replied with some commonplace remark about men always speaking ill of those whom they were opposed to; and then the interview was gracefully brought to an end by gifts of gold and garments, which were distributed amongst all the Spaniards who assisted at the interview.

I think it must be admitted that on this occasion† the great King of the West comported himself with much discretion and dignity, putting aside politely, and yet respectfully, any discussion upon theological matters, as if he had been a worldly statesman of our own time, always anxious to get rid of these subjects, as knowing how little they tend to the outward peace and physical happiness of mankind.

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* "Porque en todo era mui regozijado, en su hablar e gran Señor."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 90.

† It is curious that Cortes does not say anything of his interview in his letter to Charles the Fifth: the reason for such an omission may be because he had received no such commission as he claimed, and therefore did not like to make such a statement to the Emperor.

A well-known writer, and one thoroughly skilled in Mexican affairs, the celebrated Jesuit Acosta, remarks, in reference to the proceedings of this day, or of some other early day after the arrival of Cortes in Mexico, that many persons were of opinion that the Spaniards might have made anything they pleased of Montezuma and his people, and have introduced the gospel without bloodshed. "But," as he adds, "the judgments of God are high, and the faults on both sides were many, and so the thing turned out very differently."*

The Gospel might have been introduced peaceably.

This opinion may be well-founded; but, on the other hand, it must be remarked that the Mexicans were not in a similar state to those Indians amongst whom the most remarkable conversions have been made by peaceful means. An established priesthood, with large revenues, pompou

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* "Es opinion de muchos, que como aquel dia quedó negocio puesto, pudieran con facilidad hazer del Rey y reyno lo que quisieran, y darles la Ley de Christo con gran satisfacion y paz. Mas los juizios de Dios son altos, y los pecados de ambas partes muchos, y assí se rodeó la cosa muy diferente."—Acosta, *Hist. Nat. Moral de las Indias*, lib. vii. cap. 25.

buildings, and a carefully regulated ritual, formed an element in the Mexican Empire which would render it much less convertible to Christianity than were the comparatively primitive people of Copan and Paraguay, or the wandering tribes in Florida. Amongst these latter is to be found the most remarkable instance of conversion, or rather of opportunity for conversion, that, I think, ever was recorded. It is to be met with in the narrative of Cabeça de Vaca. He and his companions, shipwrecked, naked, and for a long time treated as slaves, acquired, probably through their medical knowledge, or greater discernment in things in general, an influence, as of gods, over the natives of Florida. The remarkable point of the narrative is, that they were not held in this high consideration by one tribe only, but by all they came amongst; and that they were borne in triumph from one tribe to another, all men's goods in the tribe at whose grounds they arrived being brought out before them, and, to the great vexation of the Christians, divided amongst their followers, who consisted of the preceding tribe.*

Mexicans not easy to convert.

Treatment of Cabeça de Vaca and his companions in Florida.

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* "I los robadores para consolarles los decian, que

The whole of this narrative seems to throw some light upon the extraordinary stories which pervade the Indian traditions in America of men of higher cultivation than their own who come and give the natives laws and manners, and then vanish away, having promised to return.

Such transactions, however, were only possible amongst a primitive people, and were not to be expected to take place amongst the Mexicans, though much, doubtless, might have been done to introduce Christianity gradually amongst them.

Cortes asks for leave to see the temple.

These speculations are a very fit introduction to the next public proceeding of Cortes, which was to ask for leave to see the great temple, dedicated to the Mexican god of war. This request

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eramos Hijos del Sol, í que teniamos poder para sanar los enfermos, í para matarlos, í otras mentiras, aun maiores que estas, como ellos las saben mejor hacer quando sienten que les conviene: í dixéronles, que nos llevasen con mucho acatamiento, í tuviesen cuidado de no enojarnos en ninguna cosa, í que nos diesen todo quanto tenian, í procurasen de llevarnos donde havia mucha Gente, í que donde llegasemos robasen ellos, í saqueasen lo que los otros tenian, porque así era costumbre."—*Naufragios de* ALVAR NUNEZ CABEÇA DE VACA, *en la Florida*, cap. xxviii. tom. 1. BARCIA, *Historiadores.*

Montezuma granted with apparent pleasure. But, for fear lest the Spaniards should do any dishonour to his gods, as they had done in the provinces, he resolved to go himself to the temple; and accordingly he repaired thither with his accustomed pomp. On their way, the Spaniards visited the great market-place, which perhaps was the best means of learning, in a short time, the skill and riches of the people by whom they were surrounded.

Visits the market on his way.

In this vast area each kind of merchandize had its own quarter; and it would be difficult to specify any kind which was not to be seen there. To begin with the most shameful merchandize, namely, that of human beings, there were as many to be found for sale as there were in Spain of those "negroes whom the Portuguese bring from Guinea."* Then, every kind of eatable, every form of dress, medicines, perfumes, un-

Commodities sold there.

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* "Esclavos y esclavas; digo, que traian tantos á vender á aquella gran plaça, como traen los Portugueses los negros de Guinea, e traian los atados en unas varas largas, con collares á los pescueços, porque no se les huyessen, y otros dexavan sueltos."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 92.

guents, furniture, lead, tin, brass, copper, and gold and silver ornaments wrought in the form of fruit, adorned the porticoes and allured the passer-by. Paper, that great material of civilization, was to be obtained in this wonderful emporium; also every kind of earthenware, salt, wood, tobacco, razors made of obsidian,* dressed and undressed skins, cotton of all colours in skeins, painters' colours, building materials, and manure; wine, honey, wax, charcoal; and little dogs. Convenience was well considered; porters were to be hired,† and refreshments to be obtained. One curious thing, which Cortes noticed, was, that every commodity was sold by number or by measure, and not by weight.

Wise regulations of the market.

With regard to the regulations under which this vast bazaar was held, it may be noticed that

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* "Obsidian, jade, and Lydian-stone, are three minerals, which nations ignorant of the use of copper or iron, have in all ages employed for making keen-edged weapons. . . . This variety of lava" (obsidian) "was employed as an object of ornament: and the inhabitants of Quito made beautiful looking-glasses with an obsidian divided into parallel laminæ."—HUMBOLDT'S *Personal Narrative*, vol. i. chap. 2.

† "Hay Hombres como los que llaman en Castilla Ganapanes, para traher cargas."—LORENZANA, p. 103.

he Mexicans had arrived at that point of civili-
ation, where fraud is frequent in the sale of
oods; but, superior even to ourselves in this
ay, they had a counterpoise to this in a body of
fficers called judges,* who sat in a court-house
n the spot, and before whom all causes and
natters relating to the market were tried, and
ho commanded the delinquents to be punished.
here were also officers who went continually
bout the market-place, watching what was sold,
nd the measures which were used. When they
und a false one they broke it. This market
as so much frequented, that the busy hum of all
e buying and selling might be heard at the
stance of a league. Among the Spaniards there
ere soldiers who had served in Italy and in the
ast; and they said, that a market-place so skil-

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* "Hay en esta gran Plaza una muy buena Casa
no de Audiencia, donde estan siempre sentados diez,
oze Personas, que son Jueces, y libran todos los casos,
cosas, que en el dicho Mercado acaecen, y mandan
tigar los Delinqüentes. Hay en la dicha Plaza otras
rsonas, que andan continuo entre la gente, mirando
que se vende, y las medidas con que miden lo que
nden; y se ha visto quebrar alguna que estaba falsa."
LORENZANA, p. 104.

fully laid out, so large, so well-managed, and s
full of people, they had never seen. In consider
ing the list of commodities which were to be sol
there, and which may serve to make life tolerable
Things deficient in the market of Mexico.
I note only three deficiencies,—bills of exchange
newspapers, and books; but any one of thes
things indicates a civilization of a higher orde
than the Mexican; and they were reserved to b
invented by some of the steadiest and subtles
thinkers* of the great races of the world.

From the market-place the Spaniards moved o
towards the temple, or to what, as before noticed
might have been justly called the sacred city, fo
even before they reached the central square, the
came upon courts and enclosures, which, doub
less, were the precincts of the temple, and mu
have been in some way connected with its se
vices. At last they reached the polished su
face of the great court, where not even a straw
any particle of dirt was suffered to remain. Amid
all the temples which adorned this court one stoo
pre-eminent, where Montezuma himself was wo

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* The Italians have, I believe, the best claim to th
merit of having invented bills of exchange.

ipping. On seeing Cortes, the king sent
iests and two of his principal nobles to conduct
e Spanish Commander up to the summit of the
mple. When they came to the steps, which
re a hundred and fourteen in number, the at-
ıdant Mexicans wished to take Cortes by the
ns, and to assist him in ascending; but he dis-
ıised with their aid, and, accompanied by his
n, mounted to the highest platform, where they
a horrible figure like a serpent, with other
eous figures, and much blood newly spilt. What
ıange from the wisdom of the market-place to
sublime folly and foulness of the temple!

At this moment Montezuma came forth from
chamber, or chapel, if we may call it so, where
had been worshipping. Receiving Cortes and
company with much courtesy, he said, "You
t be tired, my Lord Malinché, after your
nt to this our great temple." But Cortes
ied that "he and his men were never tired
ınything."*

Then the King took Cortes by the hand, and

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* "Que él, ni nosotros no nos cansavamos en cosa
una."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 92.

e him look down upon the great city, and u
the surrounding cities on the border of the lak
those beautiful glistening satellites of the prim
and pre-eminent Mexico. Cortes, however, d
not tell us anything of the beauties and wond
which were to be seen in this view from
summit of the temple. It is the inherent cu
of politic and foreseeing men, that they enj
and even recognize, the present so much less th
other men do. The common soldiers looked dow
and gazed in all directions, noticing the temp
the oratories, the little towers, the floatin
dens,* and those light and graceful drawb

View from the summit of the great temple.

* "They plait and twist willows, and roots o
plants, or other materials, together, which are li
capable of supporting the earth of the garden
united. Upon this foundation they lay the light b
that float on the lake, and over all, the mud and
which they draw up from the bottom of the same lak
Their regular figure is quadrangular; their length and
breadth various; but as far as we can judge, they are
about eight perches long, and not more than three in
breadth, and have less than a foot in elevation above
the surface of the water. These were the first fields
which the Mexicans owned after the foundation of
Mexico; there they first cultivated the maize, great
pepper, and other plants necessary for their support.

ıich were especially to be seen in the surround-
g towns. It was then that a murmuring talk
ɔse amongst them about Rome and Constanti-
ple, and all that each man had seen of what was
emed, till this moment, most beautiful in the
ɔrld. But, as Cortes looked down, what other
ɔughts were his! A poet speaks of "the cloudy
:eheads of the great." The child and the rustic,
simple envy of those above them, who seem to
em all-powerful, little dream of the commanding
res and hungry anxieties which beset the man
ıo has undertaken to play any considerable part
the world. And, if ever there was a man who

The anxious thoughts of a leader of men.

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progress of time, as those fields grew numerous *cessivamente moltiplicati*, orig.) from the industry of ɔse people, there were among them gardens of flowers d odoriferous plants, which were employed in the rship of their gods, and served for the recreation of nobles. . . . . In the largest gardens there is com-ɔnly a little tree, and even a little hut to shelter the tivator, and defend him from rain, or the sun. . . . . at part of the lake where those floating gardens are, a place of infinite recreation, where the senses receive highest possible gratification."—CLAVIGERO, *History Mexico*, book vii. p. 375. See also TORQUEMADA, lib. . cap. 32.

had undertaken a great part, without rehearsal, was Cortes. The multitude of people moving t

The thoughts of Cortes as he looked down from the temple.

and fro, which enlivened the beautiful prospect i the eyes of the common soldier, afforded matte of most serious concern to the man who had t give orders for the next step in this untrodde wilderness of action. Even the hum of th market-place was no pleasant murmur in his ear for he could readily translate it into the fierc cries of thousands of indignant warriors.

It is often happy for us that we do not kno the thoughts of those who stand by us, or perha on this occasion, the lofty politeness of the sove reign and the warrior might have changed int an instant death-struggle as to which of ther should be hurled down first from that platform and complete the sacrifice of that eventful day.

Cortes, in whom Policy slumbered only whe Religion spoke to him, said to Father de Olmedo "It appears to me, that we might just make trial of Montezuma, if he would let us set u our church here?"* The wiser priest replied

* "Paréceme Señor Padre, que será bien que demo un tiento á Montequma; sobre que nos dexe hazer aqu nuestra Iglesia."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 92.

that it would be very well to make that request if there were any likelihood of its being successful, but that the present did not appear to him the time for making it, nor did he see in Montezuma the humour to grant it. Upon this Cortes abandoned the idea, and merely asked the king to allow the Spaniards to see his gods. To this Montezuma, after having consulted his priests, consented; and the Spaniards entered those dread abodes of idolatry.

There is a family likeness in most idols; and, when the Spaniards had advanced within the little tower where the hall of the "god of war" was, they found two hideous creatures seated on an altar and under a canopy, large and bulky figures, the one representing Huitzilopochtli and the other Tezcatlipuk. The god of war had a broad face, wide mouth, and terrible eyes. He was covered with gold, pearls, and precious stones; and was girt about with golden serpents. In one hand he held a bow, in the other arrows. A little idol, his page, stood by him, holding a lance and a golden shield. On Huitzipochtli's neck, were the faces of men wrought in silver, and their hearts in gold. Close by were

The Mexican idols: the god of war.

braziers with incense, and on the braziers three real hearts of men who had that day been sacrificed.

All around, the walls were black with clotted blood.*

Tezcatlipuk.

On the left hand of the god of war was Tezcatlipuk, with a countenance like that of a bear, and with mirrors for eyes. A string of little demons encircled his waist. Five human hearts, of men that day sacrificed, were burning before this idol.

Centeotl.

A third false deity, the "deity of increase," half woman,† half crocodile, gilded and jewelled like the rest, was to be seen, not in the same room with Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipuk, but enniched above, in a recess that was formed in the highest part of the tower.

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* Literary men and antiquarians have blamed the efforts of those who sought to efface the memory of these accursed idolatries from the minds of the Indians. We cannot wonder, however, at any sacrifice of books, pictures, or even buildings, for that great end.

† Bernal Diaz says "half man," but I think the deity must have been Centeotl, the Mexican Ceres, the goddess of *centli* (maize).

In this recess, too, the walls and the altar on which the idol stood were covered with blood. The smell of the great hall had been like that of some slaughter-house; but in the recess, the crowning horror of this accursed place, the detestable odour was so overpowering, that the only thought of the Spaniards who had ascended into this part of the building was how most quickly to get out of it.* Here was a great drum made of serpents' skins, which, when struck, gave forth a melancholy hideous sound; and here were instruments of sacrifice, and many hearts of men.

Cortes must testify against these idolatries.

It might be prudent, or it might not be prudent, but Cortes felt that he must give some utterance to his feelings; and we may well wonder at the reserve with which he spoke, rather than at his being able to refrain no longer. With a smile he said, "I do not know, my Lord Montezuma, how so great a king and so learned a man as you are, can have avoided to perceive literally, should not have collected in your

* "Era tanto el hedor, que no viamos la hora de salirnos á fuera."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 92.

thoughts) that these idols of yours are not gods, but evil things which are called 'devils;' and that you and all your priests may be satisfied of this, do me the favour not to take it ill that we should put in the lofty recess of this tower a cross, and then in the hall where your deities Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipuk are, we will make a compartment where we may put an image of Our Lady (this Montezuma had already seen), and you will behold the fear which those idols that keep you in delusion have of it."

Montezuma defends his false gods.

But Montezuma and his priests were troubled and grieved at these words; and the King said, "My Lord Malinché, if you believe that it is your business to say such dishonourable things as you have said of my gods, I will not show them to you. We hold them for very good gods; and they give us health and rain, harvests and fine weather, victories and whatever we desire: it is our business to adore them, and to sacrifice unto them. I must request of you that no more words be uttered to their dishonour." To this speech, and to the alteration of aspect in the King, which Cortes noticed with the swift appreciation of a courtier, the Spaniard with an apparently gay

countenance replied, "It is time that Your Highness and we should go."

To this Montezuma answered that it was well, but that for his part he must stay behind, to pray and make sacrifice for the sin he had committed in permitting the Spaniards to ascend the great temple, and for his having been the cause of injurious words having been uttered against his gods. Upon this, the Spanish Commander, with all due courtesy, took leave; and his men, descending with difficulty the steps of the temple, marched back to their quarters, sickened and saddened, but somewhat enlightened as to the nature of the men by whom they were surrounded.

Cortes returns from the temple.

Coming into the light of day, hearing the busy tumult of the market-place and the merry noise of children playing in the sun; then catching bright glimpses of the water, and looking at the innumerable boats which plied along the streets; all that they had seen in the dark and dismal charnel-houses of Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipuk must have seemed to the Spaniards an ill-omened dream. Years would pass away, and they would become veterans, scarred with wounds and rejoicing in renown, before they would have time

to think over and to realize to themselves the full horror of the accursed things which they had looked upon that day.

Living in a Christian country and with every means of enlightenment, we feel it difficult to comprehend how so much civilization, or what looks very like it, could be found in company with barbarous human sacrifices; but this apparent anomaly is soon explained, when we come to look into some of the prime causes of movement in the human soul. In justice to the Mexicans, we should consider what can be said for them. We of this age must not share the blind sentiments of horror which occupied the minds of Cortes and his followers, and served to justify their subsequent proceedings.

Some attempt to explain the horrors of the Mexican religion.

When we reflect upon the untoward, disastrous, and ridiculous aspect of human life—how, for instance, little things done, or neglected to be done, in youth, have so fatal an influence throughout a life-time,—when we behold the success of iniquity, and contemplate the immense injustice, and the singular infelicity, which often beset the most innocent of men—nay, further

when we see the spitefulness of nature—for so it seems unless profoundly understood,—when we consider the great questions of human life, such as free will and the origin of evil, which are not explained now, but only agreed to be postponed in humble hopefulness, and which, in the earlier periods of the world's history, exercised to the full their malign discouragement,—we cannot wonder at the belief in evil deities of great power and supremacy. And, then, what more natural than to clothe such deities with the worst attributes of bad men, and to suppose that they must be approached with servility, and appeased by suffering. Then, further, what more natural than to offer to such gods of the best upon earth, namely, our fellow men.

It must not be forgotten that there was often a friendly feeling towards the persons sacrificed; and that in some cases they were looked upon as messengers to the gods, and charged with distinct messages.

The idea of human sacrifice, as pleasing to the gods, being once adopted in moments of victory, doubt, or humiliation, is soon developed. The evil practice becomes a system, and partakes of

the strength of all systems, taking root amongst the interests, the passions, and the pleasures of mankind; and, thenceforward, he will be a bold man, and, rarer still, an audacious thinker, not given to stop anywhere in thought, who shall lift himself above the moral atmosphere of his nation, and shall say, "This thing which all consent in, and which I have known from my youth upward, is wrong."

Having thus stated something on behalf of the Mexicans, which does not however make the indignation of the Spanish soldiers less reasonable or natural, I take up the thread of the story, and return to the little garrison of Cortes in the midst of this splendid city of cruel and polite idolaters.

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I must call the attention of the reader to the fact, that a work which, for convenience, is constantly referred to in these pages as Lorenzana, is a collection of the letters of Cortes, made by Francisco Antonio Lorenzana, Archbishop of Mexico, and published, with maps and annotations of some value, in 1770. For an account of these letters, which, from their length, may more fitly be called despatches, see Stevens's "American

Bibliographer." The first despatch is lost: the second contains the occurrences from 16th of July, 1519, to 30th of October, 1520; the third contains the occurrences from 30th of October, 1520, to 15th of May, 1522. The second and third despatches are those principally referred to in this biography.



## CHAPTER V.

*Difficult position of Cortes—Capture of Montezuma.*

What course left for Cortes?

THE question as to what Cortes was to do next, was a most difficult one. If we put ourselves, in imagination, into his place, and lay down several plans of action, we shall find great difficulties inherent in any of them. Was he to play the part of an ambassador, and, after observing the nature of the country, and endeavouring to form some league of amity with the monarch, to return to Cuba or to Spain? He would but have returned to a prison or a grave; for the ambassadorial capacity which he assumed was a mere pretext.

Was he to make a settlement in the country? For that purpose he must get safe out of Mexico, return through territories whose gods he had insulted, and whose people he had slaughtered, and

taking up a position at his city of Vera Cruz, remain exposed to the revengeful attacks by sea of his employer, the Governor of Cuba.

Was he to be a missionary or a trader? By what unfit men was he surrounded for such enterprises as these!

His only career was conquest; and unfortunately, in the rapidity of that conquest lay his chief hope of safety. Now, what is so swift as terror? What could he do in that way, what hostage could he secure, which should paralyze at once the arms of the vigorous multitudes who surrounded him, waiting but a despot's nod to make at least the endeavour to overwhelm these unwelcome strangers?

There was no such hostage but the person of the king himself! True that this monarch had received Cortes graciously and grandly, and it would be an act of vast perfidiousness thus to requite his hospitality. But policy does not take the virtues, or the affections, into council. This act of treachery seemed the safest thing to be done, and, therefore, with Cortes, it was the best. I have shown that the destruction of the fleet was not so great a transaction as it has often been

represented to be, and that other people shared in it; but this projected seizure of Montezuma's person belonged to Cortes alone, and whatever greatness there was in it, call it great prudence or call it great iniquity, was his. I am reminded of a maxim, full of wisdom, uttered by a man versed in conspiracy,* who said that there are certain positions of affairs, in which it is impossible to make a step which shall not be a wrong one: but that men do not come into those positions without some considerable fault of their own. The fault in the position of Cortes was an incurable one, namely, the uncertainty of support from the mother-country, but it was a fault occasioned by his original misconduct to his employer, Velazquez. In the greatness of the conquest we are apt to forget the poor position of the conqueror, and to speak of him as if he had been a powerful prince, or an authorised general, with all the strength and the responsibility of such a station; whereas he was merely a brilliant adventurer, having lost the authority with which he was originally clothed. It was the misfor-

Fatal position of Cortes.

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* Cardinal de Retz.

:une that beset nearly all the Spanish conquests n America, that they were made by men of nsufficient power and authority for such transac- ions. Another Alexander was required to con- quer another India. Had there been a powerful European prince for such an undertaking, con- olidation might have gone hand in hand with onquest; and millions, absolutely millions, of ves might have been saved. But that want of ime which is the saddest and most common de- ciency for all men in power, the disturbed state f Europe at this period, and the inability to re- ognize what is most requisite to be done, which elongs to each successive generation, prevented ie conquest of America from taking anything ke its highest form, and threw it into the hands men who lacked the authority to maintain emselves in the position which they had assumed. The reader, who probably knows the outline the story of Cortes, may be surprised at his reer being considered otherwise than most suc- ssful. On the contrary, however, I venture to ink that a conquest is most dearly purchased ich is accompanied by large destruction of the nquered people.

Also of other Spanish conquerors.

The resolve of Cortes.

Having made an apology for the resolve of Cortes, which he would probably have thought very needless, we may proceed to consider its execution. The deed, once resolved upon, was sure to be swiftly accomplished. That miserable interval between resolve and execution, which is the torment and the ruin of weak men, was a thing not known in the career of Cortes. He had not been one week in Mexico before he resolved to seize the person of Montezuma, had chosen his pretext for doing it, and had arranged his plans.

His pretext.

The plea that he made use of was a skirmish (into the details of which we need not enter) between Juan de Escalante, who had been left in command at Villa Rica, and the people of a neighbouring town, called by the Spaniards Almeria, in which skirmish Escalante and six Spaniards had fallen. That this affair was only important as it furnished a pretext, may be seen from the account which Cortes gives of the transaction to Charles the Fifth, in which he states that from some things which he had seen since his entry into Mexico, and also from what he had observed on his journey, it appeared to him, "that it was convenient for the royal service, and for the security of the

Spaniards under his command, that Montezuma should be in his power, and should not have complete liberty." Cortes adds, that he feared lest there should be an unfavourable change in the Mexican Monarch's conduct towards the Spaniards, "especially as we Spaniards are somewhat difficult to live with, and troublesome, and if Montezuma should take offence, he was powerful enough to do us much harm; so much so, indeed, that we might be utterly destroyed" (literally, *that there might be no memory left of us*).* Moreover, Cortes thought that, Montezuma once in his power, all the provinces of the Mexican Empire would easily be brought under the Spanish dominion.

Cortes communicated to his soldiers his inten-

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* "Que convenia al Real Servicio, y á nuestra seguridad, que aquel Señor estuviesse en mi poder, y no en toda su libertad, porque no mudasse el propósito, y voluntad, que mostraba en servir á Vuestra Alteza, mayormente, que los Españoles somos algo incomportables, é importunos, é porque enojándose nos podria hacer mucho daño, y tanto, que no oviesse memoria de nosotros, segun su gran poder."—Lorenzana, p. 89.

tion of seizing Montezuma; and they, according to Bernal Diaz, passed the night in prayer to the Lord, "that the enterprise might be so conducted as to redound to His holy service."* In the morning, careful preparations having been made, Cortes went to the palace, accompanied by five of his principal captains and his two interpreters, Geronimo de Aguilar and Donna Marina. So cautious a general took care to keep up the line of communication between his advanced position and the main body of his forces in the fortress, by stationing parties of his men at the points where four streets met.† When arrived at the palace, Cortes, according to his own account, began by talking playfully to Montezuma, who gave him on that occasion some golden ornaments and one of his daughters. The Spanish General then turned the discourse to the affair of Almeria, and to the loss of the Spaniards under Escalante, in which a certain unfortunate cacique was con-

The mode of execution.

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* "Rogando á Dios, que fuesse de tal modo, que redundasse para su santo servicio."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 95.

† "Dejando buen recaudo en las encrucijadas de las Calles."—Lorenzana, p. 84.

erned, whose name, as corrupted by Spanish pronunciation, was Qualpopoca. Cortes, who, s Bernal Diaz says, "did not care a chestnut bout the matter" (*no lo tenia en una castaña*), ade it out to be a concern of the most serious ature. He was answerable, he declared, to his ing for the Spaniards who had been killed; nd Qualpopoca had said that it was by Monte- uma's orders he had committed this assault. The Ionarch immediately took from his wrist a bracelet ith a seal bearing the effigy of the Mexican god war, and giving it in charge to some of his tendants, ordered that they should go to the ene of this skirmish between the Spaniards and s people, that they should inquire into the atter, and bring Qualpopoca bound before him.

This was a very prompt procedure, and Cortes anked the monarch for it, but said that, until e matter was cleared up, Montezuma must come d live with the Spaniards in their quarters, ich, it is almost needless to add, they had taken e to make a strong post of. The Spanish neral begged Montezuma not to be annoyed this request, saying that he was not to be a soner, but was to conduct his government as

Cortes insists upon Montezuma coming to the Spanish quarters.

before, and that he should occupy what apart
ments he pleased, and, indeed, that he woul
have the Spaniards in addition to his own at
tendants, to serve him in whatsoever he shoul
command.

Monte-
zuma's
amaze-
ment.

But it may be conjectured that all these sooth
ing words were not even heard by the Mexica
monarch, who sat stupified by the vast audacit
of the demand. Here was a man, into whos
eyes other men had not ventured to look; wh
was accustomed, when rarely he moved from hi
palace, to see the crowd prostrate themselves be
fore him as he went along, as if he were indee
a god; who never set foot upon the ground:* an

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* "Jamas puso sus piés en el suelo, sino siempr
llevado en ombros de Señores."—Acosta, *Hist. Nat.
Mor. de Indias*, lib. vii. cap. 22. This assertion, tha
Montezuma never set foot on the ground, must be con
fined to his appearances in public; for, when he wen
in disguise, like an Eastern caliph, to ascertain whethe
his judges took bribes, he must have gone about lik
any other man. "Tambien se disfraçava muchas vezes
y aun echava quien ofreciesse cohechos á sus Juezes,
los provocase a cosa mal hecha, y en cayendo en alg
desto, era luego sentencia de muerte con ellos."—
Acosta, *ibid.*

now, in his own palace, undefeated, not bound, with nothing to prepare him by degrees for such a fearful descent of dignity, he was asked by a few strangers, whom he had sought to gain by hospitality, and to whom he had just given rich presents, to become their prisoner in the very quarters which he had himself graciously appointed for their entertainment. It is a large assertion to make of anything, that it is the superlative of its kind, but it must, I think, be admitted, that the demand of Cortes was the most audacious that was ever made, and showed an impudence (there is no other fitting word) which borders upon the heroic. At this day, though we have all known the story from childhood, it seems as if it were a new thing; and we still wonder what Montezuma will say in reply to Cortes.

The unparalleled request of Cortes.

The Monarch's answer, when he could speak at all, was the following: "I am not one of those persons who are put in prison. Even if I were to consent, my subjects would never permit it."*

Montezuma refuses.

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* "Je ne suis pas de ceux que l'on met en prison;

Cortes persists.

Cortes urged his reasons why Montezuma should adopt the course proposed by the Spaniards, but, as these reasons were based upon falsehood, it is no wonder, that even in the opinion of one of his followers, he should have appeared to have the worse of the argument.* This controversy lasted some time, and Cortes himself speaks of the prolixity of the discourse, and betrays all the insolence of a conqueror, when he declares that it is needless to give account of all that passed, as not being substantial to the case.†

Meanwhile the peril of the Spaniards was increasing, and the patience of these fierce men was

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même si j'y consentais mes sujets ne le souffriraient jamais."—Fernando D'Alva Ixtlilxochitl, *Hist. des Chichimèques*, chap. 85;—Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*. This account, given by the historian of Mexican origin, is confirmed in some respects by Bernal Diaz, who says, "Que no era persona la suya para que tal le mandassen."—Cap. 95.

* "Cortés le replicó mui buenas razones; y el Montezuma le respondia mui mejores."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 95.

† "Acerca de esto pasamos muchas pláticas, y razones, que serían largas para las escribir, y aun para dár cuenta de ellas á Vuestra Alteza, algo prolijas, y tambien no sustanciales para el caso."—Lorenzana, p. 86.

fast passing away, when one of them, a man with a harsh voice, exclaimed, "What is the use of all these words? Let him yield himself our prisoner, or we will this instant stab him. Wherefore, tell him that if he cries out, or makes disturbance, we must kill him, for it is more important in this conjuncture that we should secure our own lives than lose them." Montezuma turned to Donna Marina for the meaning of this fierce utterance; and we cannot but be glad that it was a woman who had to interpret these rough words to the falling Monarch, and even to play the part of counsellor as well as interpreter. She begged him to go with the Spaniards without any resistance; for, she said, she knew that they would honour him much, like a great lord as he was; and that on the other side lay the danger of immediate death.

Marina counsels the Monarch.

The unfortunate Montezuma now made a last effort to obviate the dire indignity. He said, My Lord Malinché, may this please you:—I have one son and two daughters, legitimate. Take them as hostages, and do not put this affront upon me. What will my nobles say, if they see me borne away as a prisoner?" But Cortes was

not the man to swerve in the least from his purpose, and he said that Montezuma must come with them, and that no other thing would do.

Montezuma yields.

The Monarch was obliged to yield. It is said, and is not improbable, that he was urged to declare that he acted thus in obedience to a response given by Huitzilopochtli, the Mexican god of war, though this was hardly the fitting deity to choose as the imputed instrument of such ignoble counsel.

Orders were instantly given to prepare apartments for Montezuma in the Spaniards' quarters. The Mexican nobles, whose duty it was to bear his litter, came at his bidding, and prepared themselves, barefooted, with their accustomed humility, and with more than their accustomed affection, to place the litter on their shoulders. But, as all pomp and state, even in the mightiest monarchies, requires some time for arrangement and preparation, it appears that the equipage itself was but a poor one.* And so, in a sorry manner, borne on

Montezuma quits his palace.

by his weeping nobles, and in deep silence, Montezuma quitted his palace, never to return. He

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* "Trahian unas Andas, no muy bien aderezadas llorando, lo tomaron en ellas, con mucho silencio."—Lorenzana, p. 86.

was forthwith taken to the Spanish quarters. On his way he encountered throngs of his faithful subjects, who, though they could hardly be aware of what the transaction meant, would, at the slightest nod of the Monarch, have thrown themselves upon the swords of the Spaniards, in all the plenitude of devotion of a people who believed in their King as the greatest of men, and as the vicegerent of their gods on earth.

But no such signal came. Slowly and silently the litter passed onwards ; and it must have been with strange misgivings that the people saw their Monarch encompassed by those whom they had long known to be their enemies, the Tlascalan allies of Cortes, and by a strange race of bearded, armed men, who seemed, as it were, to have risen from the earth, to appal their nobles and to affront their religion.

This is an unparalleled transaction. There is nothing like it, I believe, in the annals of the world.

Montezuma's despotism the cause of his ruin.

The completeness of the despotism of Montezuma was a great part of his ruin. It was noticed by the Spaniards, as they entered Mexico, that his grandees did not dare to look him in the face.

To use the expressive words of the chronicler, "they did not, in thought even, look up at him, but kept their eyes fixed on the wall."* It was very natural, therefore, for Cortes to think that striking a blow at the head would paralyze all the body politic in Mexico. He would hardly have thought of seizing any one of the Chiefs of Tlascala, where there was a Senate and men of nearly equal authority. In such a case the indignity is felt by all, and the power to avenge it is scarcely lessened by the forced removal of any one.

In a short time the officers who had been sent for by Montezuma's signet were brought to Mexico. They were, in all, seventeen persons. Being asked if they had made the attack on the Spaniards by Montezuma's orders, they said no: but, upon their sentence being carried into execution, which sentence was, that they should be burnt,† they all confessed that it was by Montezuma's orders they had acted. Cortes, thereupon, added to the inhumanity of this atrocious sentence

Qualpopoca burnt.

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* "Todos estos señores ni por pensamiento le miravan á la cara."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 88.

† Very justly had Cortes displayed the blue and white flames upon his banner.

upon these unfortunate men the cruel indignity to Montezuma of putting him in irons during their execution, which took place in front of the palace. Terror was evidently what the Spaniard throughout relied upon; and, in doing so, he appealed to an influence which had long been predominant in the mind of every Mexican. One who loved them well,* and who devoted his life to their conversion, owns that their character was servile.† They had been taught, he says, to do nothing for the love of good, but all things solely from the fear of punishment. To appease their gods they would sacrifice their own children. In

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* Peter of Ghent.

† "Ils sont bien disposés à accepter notre religion; mais ce qui est mal, c'est que leur caractère est servile; ls ne font rien s'ils n'y sont forcés; on ne peut rien obtenir d'eux par la douceur ou la persuasion. Cela ne vient pas de leur naturel, c'est le résultat de l'habitude. On les a accoutumés à ne rien faire pour l'amour du bien, mais seulement par crainte des châtiments. Tous leurs sacrifices, qui consistaient à tuer leurs propres enfants ou à les mutiler, étaient le résultat de la terreur et non pas de l'amour que leurs dieux leur inspiraient." —*Lettre du Frère* PIERRE DE GAND, *en date du* 27 *Juin*, 529. TERNAUX-COMPANS, *Voyages*.

Terror a prevailing influence in the minds of the Mexicans.

truth, though taking many forms, terror was their god; and now a greater terror than they had hitherto known—a terror that could not be dispelled by their deities or their priests—had come amongst them. Premature decay is ever inherent in a one-sided cultivation of the powers, the intellect, or the affections, of mankind.



## CHAPTER VI.

*Consequences of the Capture—Montezuma becomes a vassal of the King of Spain—Pamphilo de Narvaez arrives upon the Coast—Cortes quits Mexico and defeats Narvaez.*

THE pretext of Montezuma's capture being disposed of, we naturally turn to consider the consequences of the capture itself. We may imagine the rumours which ran through the city after Montezuma had been seen to accompany the Spaniards to their quarters—what a fervid noise rose up from the thronged market-place as the news was bruited there; how it was re-echoed in the gay streets, where the boatmen exchanged news with the passers-by on the land; what fierce intonation was given to it in the sacred precincts of the temple, in the colleges, and the convents; and with what subdued

and stealthy voices the matter was discussed i the palaces of grave and powerful nobles.

Very little restraint upon Montezuma.

The wary Cortes strove to make the imprison ment look as much like a visit as possible. Th Mexican King received ambassadors, directe judges, held his court, and continued to fulfil th functions of royalty nearly after the same fashio that he had been accustomed to. He was no restricted in his amusements, not even in th chase; and the slightest indignity shown to hi by any Spaniard was severely punished by Corte

Meanwhile, what were the thoughts, the plans the hopes, and the fears of this captive Monarch Historians, who are often supposed to know every thing, and to be able to write with an insight int the minds of their principal personages possesse only by the writers of fiction, will always b sorely puzzled to account for Montezuma's con duct. But, if one is obliged to give any ex planation of it, that explanation must, I think, b based upon the ground that Montezuma reall believed in the notion that the coming of Corte and his men fulfilled the traditions of the Mexica race. A near acquaintance with the Spaniard gave Montezuma a greater insight into, and ap

The probable thoughts of Montezuma in captivity.

prehension of, their power than was possessed by most of his subjects. Moreover, he doubtless perceived that his best chance of preserving his own life was in preventing disturbance of any kind. It must be recollected also, that in dealing with Cortes he had to encounter one of the craftiest of men; and, finally, the circumstances were such as would have greatly perplexed any man who was not perfectly ready to peril his own life,—who did not, to use an emphatic expression, carry his life in his hand.

There is nothing which can serve better to illustrate the limits of Montezuma's freedom of action at the present moment, the extent of the power which Cortes had gained by bringing Montezuma to his quarters, and the general feeling of the Mexican people, than the religious observances of the Mexican Monarch. Had the captive been of the religion of his captors, or any religion which did not require public demonstration, a chapel might have been put up in his prison; and, comparatively speaking, much less would have been indicated by the Monarch's absence from, or presence at, religious rites and ceremonies. But, whatever was left of kingship

in Montezuma must be seen, or inferred, from his presence on the summit of that dread temple which overlooked the whole city. Accordingly, we find that Montezuma demanded permission from Cortes (what a humbling of the mighty!) to go to his temple to make sacrifices and to fulfil his devotions, in order, as he probably told the Spaniards, that he might show himself to his people, and, afterwards, give his captains and principal men to understand that it was by the command of his god Huitzilopochtli that he continued to remain in the power of the Spaniards. Cortes wisely granted the request, warning Montezuma at the same time, that if there were any disturbance, it would be at the peril of his life. To ensure the constant presence of that peril, one hundred and fifty Spanish soldiers were to accompany the King. Cortes also made it a condition that there should be no human sacrifice. There were, he said, the altars of the Christian religion and the image of "Our Lady," before which the King might pray. Montezuma promised that he would sacrifice no living soul, and set forth to the great temple in full state with his sceptre borne before him, his people and his noble

Montezuma is allowed to go to the temple.

showing themselves as obedient and as respectful as heretofore. But the human sacrifices had already taken place, for, in the preceding night, four victims* had been sacrificed. The assertion, therefore, of Cortes, that while he was in Mexico no human sacrifices were allowed,† must be taken with considerable limitations. The truth is, that neither Cortes nor the prudent Father Olmedo could at that time prevent these sacrifices taking place, for, as Bernal Diaz says, "they were obliged to dissimulate with Montezuma, as Mexico was much disposed to revolt, and other great cities, together with the nephews of Montezuma." The King did not stay long in the temple, and when he returned, he was in high good humour, and gave largesse to the soldiers who accompanied him. It was, no doubt, a great satisfaction to the poor Monarch, to have been able to show himself to his people in so much apparent freedom.

Cortes cannot entirely prevent human sacrifices.

We discern from what has just been stated

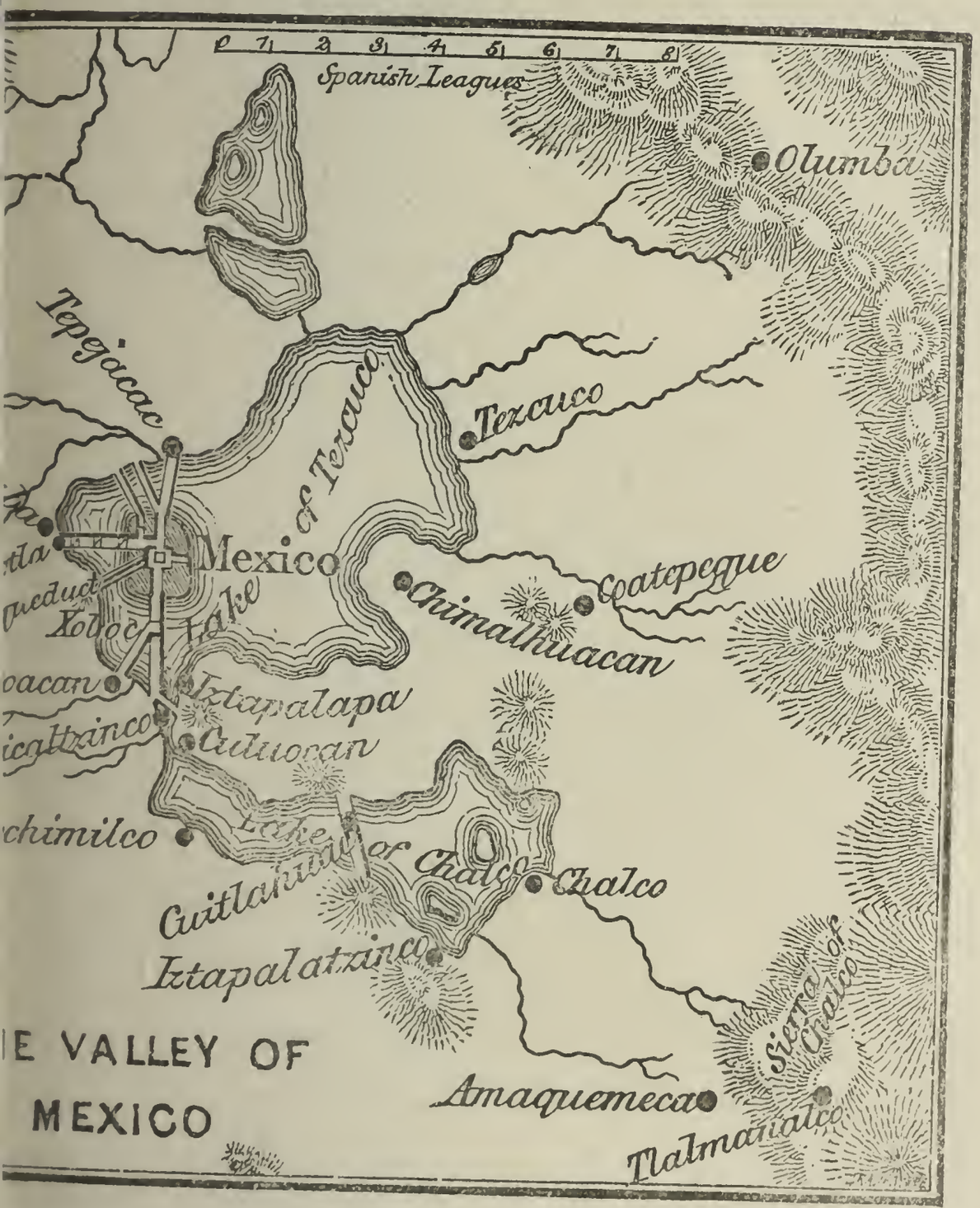
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* "Ya le tenian sacrificado desde la noche ántes quatro Indios."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 98.

† "En todo el tiempo, que yo estube en la dicha Ciudad, nunca se vió matar, ni sacrificar alguna Criatura."—LORENZANA, p. 107.

about the inability of Cortes to put a stop t human sacrifice, that the Spanish General, thoug he had the person of the Mexican Monarch in hi power, found still much to conquer in the dispo sition of the Mexican people, and in the near re lations of Montezuma, some of whom were king themselves. There can be no doubt that many o Montezuma's devoted adherents offered to mak an effort to release their master, to all of whon he replied that it was the will of Huitzilopochtl that he should be kept in this durance, or, at least he intimated that it was his own will that they should make no move for the present. There was one member, however, of the Mexican roya family who was not to be controlled so easily This was Cacamatzin, the nephew of Montezuma and King of Tezcuco, a beautiful city on the borders of the Salt Lake, in which Mexico wa situated. There is not time in this world for dis cussing minutely the family affairs of semi-bar barian princes with unpleasant names, who have perished long ago; and, therefore, I shall merely relate the fate of Cacamatzin, who was the chie personage in the conspiracy amongst the Mexican

ords and princes which now threatened the domi-
ıation of Cortes.




The Spanish General first sought to gain over
acamatzin himself; but, failing in this, he then

endeavoured to bring the influence of Montezum to bear upon his nephew, in order to allure hi within the power of the Spaniards. But the brav young Prince was filled with scorn at the patienc of his uncle, and with indignation at the proceed ings of the strangers. He had before counselle war, and that the Spaniards should have been me at the pass of the Sierra of Chalco; and he no declared that his uncle had no more courage tha a hen. He said that the Spaniards were wizard who by their magic had charmed away the gre heart and courage of Montezuma. Their forc he maintained, resided not in them, but in the gods, and in the great woman of Castille (*la gra muger de Castilla*), for thus he designated th Virgin.

Indignation of Cacamatzin, the King of Tezcuco.

Such an enemy must, at all cost, be secured and Montezuma, won over by Cortes, and pr bably informed of his nephew's contemptuo speeches, consented to a deed, the most deplo able of any which mark his captivity. It appea that he had in his pay some of the principal pe sons at the Court of Tezcuco.* By their mea

* The Mexican historian, Ixtlilxochitl, makes t

Cacamatzin's people were to be gained over, and his person secured. This scheme was successful. At a midnight meeting, when the Tezucan King was concerting his plans for attacking Mexico, he was seized, hurried into a boat (the waters of the lake ran underneath his palace), and was carried off to Mexico, where Cortes put him in chains.

Capture of the King of Tezuco.

It was now less difficult for Cortes to persuade Montezuma to give some public sign of fealty to the King of Spain. The unfortunate Monarch consented to summon his nobles and dependent princes for that purpose. No Spaniard was present at the first interview of the King with his nobles, save Orteguilla, a page in the suite of Cortes. This boy, who was about thirteen years old, had learned Mexican at Cempoala, having been left for that purpose with the Cacique. On account of his knowledge of the language he had been placed in the service of Montezuma, and was

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others of Cacamatzin guilty of this treachery. "Camá, qui ne se défiait de rien, se livra à ses frères, qui, and il fut dans le canot, s'emparèrent de sa personne, conduisirent à Mexico, et le mirent entre les mains de rtes."—*Histoire des Chichimèques*, chap. 86.

in the room, probably unobserved by the Monarch while this conference was being held.

Conference of Montezuma with his nobles.

The account which we have of this conference and for which the young page must be responsible, seems to be very like the truth. The Monarch began by reminding his counsellors of the history of their ancestors, and of the prophecy, that from the East should come those who were to have the lordship over the land of Mexico. It is in such expressions as the above that we may suspect a leaning towards that form of translation which would be most acceptable to the Spaniards; but where so much is mere conjecture, I would not say that Montezuma did not use such an expression, which he is made to emphasize by the following words of his speech, in which he declared that at that time, namely, upon the advent of those people, the Mexican Empire was to cease.

A despot like Montezuma cannot, without a diminution of dignity, quote any less important personages than the gods of his country. He accordingly proceeded to declare that the Spaniards who had now arrived were the expected strangers. He added, that Huitzilopochtli, having been sacrificed to, and consulted by the priests upon

the present juncture of affairs, would not respond as usual. All that the god would give them to understand was, that what he had said to them at other times was that which he gave now for a response, and that they should not ask him more.* The politic idol! No Delphian oracle could have shown more craft; but the conclusion which Montezuma chose to draw was, that the Mexicans should offer obedience to the King of Castille, "for," he added, with the faith in coming events proving favourable, which belongs to those who ack the presence of mind to strike a bold stroke ıow, "nothing comes of that at present,† and, :s time goes on, we shall see if we have another )etter reply from our gods, and, as we shall see he occasion, so we will act; for the present," ontinued the Monarch, "that which I command nd beseech you, is to give some sign of vassal- ge, and soon I will tell you what it may better efit us to do." He then told them how he was ıportuned by Malinché to give this sign of vas-

The response of the Mexican god of war.

Montezuma recommends to his lords an act of vassalage to the King of Spain.

* "Que lo que les ha dicho otras vezes, aquello da ra por respuesta; é que no le pregunten mas"—ERNAL DIAZ, cap. 101.

† "Al presente no va nada en ello."—BERNAL DIAZ, ). 101.

salage. Finally, he appealed to their loyalty and their gratitude. Had he not enriched them, made broad their lands, and given to them governments? If he were detained in this durance, was it not that their gods permitted it, and (as he had often had occasion to tell them) that Huitzilopochtli had enjoined upon him to stay where he was!

Grief of the Mexican King and his nobles.

The Mexican lords responded dutifully to their Sovereign's demands; but neither could they, nor could the Monarch himself, conceal the grief which insisted upon being felt at such humiliation. They wept; they sobbed: and for once the full flow of human passion was permitted at this precise court, in the presence of their dread Sovereign,—still dread to them, and never, perhaps, so dear. It represented the wailing of a whole nation, who had been accustomed to think themselves the greatest people upon earth, and who now saw their dignity trampled upon by a small body of unknown men.

Montezuma publicly recommends an act of vassalage.

When the conference broke up, Montezuma sent a messenger to Cortes, informing him, that the next day they would perform the act of vassalage to the King of Castille. Accordingly, on the following day, in the presence of Cortes and

the Spaniards, Montezuma made an address to his lords similar to the speech which he had uttered the day before, except that the hopes he had hinted, and the consolations he had suggested, in their private interview, did not, for manifest reasons, find a place in this deplorable discourse, which was an undisguised recommendation of vassalage to the King of Spain.

Montezuma could bring himself to utter the words wrung from him by the importunity of Cortes, but he could not command his feelings sufficiently to do so with anything like regal unconcern. From the first to the last his speech was broken by sobs,* and by uncontrollable emotion. When he had ended, his lords could not reply to him for some time, so great was their anguish, and so loud their lamentations. The Spaniards themselves were almost as much moved

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* "Lo qual todo les dijo llorando, con las mayores lágrimas, y suspiros, que un hombre podia manifestar; assímismo todos aquellos Señores, que le estaban oiendo, lloraban tanto, que en gran rato ne le pudieron responder, Y certifico á Vuestra Sacra Magestad, que no habia tal de los Españoles, que oiesse el Razonamiento, que no hobiesse mucha compasion."—LORENZANA, p. 97.

as the Mexicans, and there was amongst them a soldier who wept as much as Montezuma himself.*

Act of vassalage takes place.

At last the Mexican lords were sufficiently composed to declare themselves, "jointly and severally," vassals to the King of Spain. Never was a great empire more strangely and suddenly, and, we may say, ludicrously humiliated. Never did the animal creation play so great a part. Had Montezuma possessed twenty horses, his Empire would, I am convinced, have been unconquerable by Cortes. This ceremony of professing vassalage was performed with all due legalities, a notary being present, and drawing up a solemn attestation of the proceedings.

As might be expected, one of the first things demanded of Montezuma, after this act of vassalage, was gold, of which a great quantity—no less in value than one hundred thousand ducats—was handed over to Cortes by the King.

The objects of Cortes.

Cortes, who possessed a mind of the highest capacity for civil as well as military business,

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* "Se nos enternecieron los ojos, y soldado huvo, que llorava tanto como Montezuma, tanto era el amor que le teniamos."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 101. I conjecture that this soldier was Bernal Diaz himself.

turned to the best account the power and influence which he had obtained over Montezuma. It will serve to illustrate the difference between a soldier who is more than half a statesman, and the vulgar, semi-animal conqueror, to see what were the objects Cortes instantly turned his attention to, instead of the ordinary pillage and rapine which would have absorbed the whole attention of a mere man of conquest in a similar position. But Cortes reminds us of Cæsar; and war with him was but a means to an end.

Mines.

He first took care to ascertain where the Mexican gold mines were to be found, and forthwith sent Spaniards, accompanied by Montezuma's officers, into the several provinces designated as gold-producing.

Harbourage in the Gulf of Mexico.

Then he took measures to accomplish that which had, from the first, been a great object with him,* namely, to discover a good harbour in the Gulf of Mexico. On inquiring of Montezuma in reference to this point, the Monarch replied, that he did not know of any such harbour

* "Despues que en esta Tierra salté, siempre he trabajado de buscar Puerto en la Costa de ella."—Lorenzana, p. 93.

(and, indeed, the coast is very deficient in harbourage); but he provided Cortes with a map of the whole coast, made for the occasion, in which the roadsteads and the rivers were all set down; and then Cortes sent out an exploring party of Spaniards. It is remarkable that, both in this expedition, and in those which went out to survey the gold-producing provinces, the Spaniards found native chiefs who were willing to receive the messengers of Cortes, and who sent them back with gracious messages,—such was already the fame of the Spanish Conqueror throughout New Spain; but these same chiefs would not allow the officers of Montezuma to enter their country.

We may here mention a circumstance which, though slight in itself, serves well to illustrate the talents of Cortes for government, namely, that on the return of one of these exploring parties, finding that they gave a very favourable account of the fertility of the province they had visited, Cortes asked Montezuma to make a farm there for the King of Spain, where the cultivation of maize, and of cacao, the money of the country, was immediately commenced. It would

Tillage.

have been long before a mere soldier, such as Pedro de Alvarado, would have thought of these things.

But the triumph of Cortes, and that use of his power for which he has been likened to Judas Maccabæus, was in the destruction of the hideous Mexican idols, the cleansing of their foul chapels, and the stern forbidding of human sacrifice. Montezuma himself and many of his lords were present at the downfall of these idols.* It must have been a glorious sight; and Cortes, who has enough evil to answer for, may, on the other hand, be greatly praised for this deed, which alone must ever separate him from the Timours, Attilas, Genghis Khans, and other unmeaning, purposeless destroyers of mankind. Cortes tells his master Charles the Fifth, that Montezuma and the Mexican nobles assisted at the deposition of their idols with a joyful countenance. Great, then, must have been their command of countenance. What they felt in their hearts is not known to us; but any one

Destruction of idols.

* "El dicho Muteczuma, y muchos de los Principales de la Ciudad, estuvieron con migo hasta quitar los Idolos, y limpiar las Capillas, y poner las Imágenes, y todo con alegre semblante."—LORENZANA, p. 107.

who has observed mankind, and seen that there is no stronger feeling, nor one which men are more proud of, than that which binds together a class, a sect, a guild, or a profession, must know what an intensity of enmity Cortes would thenceforward have to contend against, in the priesthood whom he had thus mocked and brought to nought. I much fear, too, that even if no human sacrifice took place on the sacred stones of the great pyramidal temple, yet that, in many a dark and secret chamber, the god of war was propitiated with the usual rites, and with no lack of human hearts laid before some rude and hastily-compounded effigy of their monster demon.

These plans for mining, farming, and surveying the country, and for converting the inhabitants, did not render Cortes inattentive to the first care he had on hand,—namely, that of self-defence. It was easy at a glance to see that the warlike science of the Spaniards, superior in all respects, would be remarkably so when manifested on the water; and, moreover, that a sure mode of withdrawal, or escape, would be provided for them, if they could have a few vessels launched upon the great Salt

Lake of Mexico. The first care, therefore, of Cortes was to build brigantines to navigate the Lake.

Cortes begins to build brigantines.

The position of Montezuma, one of the most remarkable recorded in history,* remained unchanged for many months. Cortes pursued with steadiness his own ends, waiting for good news and for any reinforcements that might come to him from Spain and from Hispaniola. Meanwhile, Montezuma continued to govern as usual, only that he governed in the direction prescribed by Cortes, that is, as regarded those affairs in which the Spanish Commander took an interest.

It was impossible that such a mode of government could be otherwise than most distasteful to the chief persons governed. To have a foreign Mayor of the Palace lording it over them, was more than any people could be expected to submit to; but in this case there were also other causes

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* He might be compared to one of the Merovingian Kings of France, with an all-powerful Mayor of the Palace; but then Montezuma's Mayor was a stranger who, as it were, had dropped amongst them like a meteoric stone.

of offence, each one sufficient to produce a revolution,—namely, in the imprisonment of several royal personages, near relations of the king, and in the changes which Cortes had made, or attempted to make, in matters of religion. It must not be forgotten that the priesthood of Mexico was also the fountain of education; and it may be conceived with what ardour the young men of the great city would embrace the side of the priesthood. For youth, according to that strange inversion often seen in human affairs, is the time at which prejudices are strongest, the capability of judging being at its lowest,—all which might be of little matter, however, but that the readiness to act upon those prejudices is ten times greater then than at any other period of life. A youth does not understand holding a strong opinion, and not doing something to enforce it. Nor was the present an occasion when the older and graver men of a city would be likely to impose the least restraint upon the younger and the more impatient. The King imprisoned, the royal family maltreated, the chiefs made nought of, a foreign enemy introduced into the capital, and, above all, the gods deposed and ridiculed, what could be

Government of Cortes hateful to the Mexicans.

expected but that the citizens of Mexico should be in a state of fervour and ebullition, hardly to be repressed even by the risk of immediate personal injury to their monarch?

Montezuma himself bore his imprisonment quietly enough for some time. Cortes ventured to tempt him on several occasions with the offer of liberty, which the Monarch refused to profit by, alleging that, if he were in entire liberty, he might be compelled by the importunity of his vassals to take such steps against the Spaniards as he himself would not approve of.*

It must be confessed that Montezuma appears to have been a mean-spirited person. He may, however, have suspected that the proposal of Cortes was only made for the purpose of sounding him, which certainly was the case. As the days went on, his nobles became more importunate, his priests more imperative, his own discontent more developed; and this feeling was probably aug-

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* "Sus Vasallos le importunassen, ó le induciessen á que hiciesse alguna cosa contra su voluntad, que fuesse fuera del servicio de V. A., y que él tenia propuesto de servir á Vuestra Magestad en todo lo á él posible."—LORENZANA, p. 88.

mented by various little slights to his dignity, of which history makes no mention, but upon which, as a monarch, he doubtless laid much stress.

Change in Montezuma.

There certainly was a change at this period in Montezuma's conduct, and the following are the motives for it which are stated by an historian,* who, whatever his inaccuracies, had at least the advantage, as a chaplain of Cortes, of hearing his version of the matter. The chaplain

The motives for that change.

assigns three motives for this change in Montezuma; the continued importunities of his people, an interview which the king had with the Devil, and the mutability of human nature. It is said by the Spanish historians, that Montezuma secretly prepared an army of an hundred thousand men; but this is not at all likely, as it could hardly have been done without the cognizance of the two thousand Tlascalans who were in the city.†

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* Gomara.

† I agree with what CLAVIGERO says upon this matter, who seems in general to show much judgment in writing upon these affairs. "Quasi tutti gli storici Spagnuoli dicono, que allorchè il Re fece chiamar Cortès per intimargli l'ordine di partire, avea allestito un esercito per farsi ubbidir per forza, se mai vi fosse qualche resistenza,

One day, in the sixth month of his imprisonment, the king, accompanied by several of his nobles, went into the square of the palace, and sent for Cortes. This was a very unusual proceeding. Cortes was accustomed to pay his court to Montezuma once or twice in the day, but had never been sent for before. "I do not like this novelty," he exclaimed; "please God there may be no mischief in it." Accompanied by a few Spaniards, Cortes went immediately into the Monarch's presence, who took him by the hand, led him into a room where seats were placed for them both, and then addressed him thus:—"I pray you, take your departure from his my city and land, for my gods are very angry that I keep you here. Ask of me what you may want, and I will give it you. Do not think that I say this to you in any jest, but very much in

Montezuma requests Cortes to depart.

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na vi è una gran varietà fra loro, poichè alcuni affermano, ch'erano in arme cento mila uomini, altri scemano questo numero della metà, ed altri finalmente il riducono a cinque mila. Io mi persuado che vi sia stata in fatti qualche truppa allestita, non però per ordine del Re, ma soltanto d'alcuni Nobili di quelli, che aveano preso un più grand' impegno in questo affare."—CLAVIGERO, *Storia antica del Messico*, tom. III. lib. ix. p. 112.

earnest. Wherefore, fulfil my desire, that so i may be done, whatever may occur."

Cortes, a man whom events might surprise but could not discompose, replied at once: "I have heard what you have said, and thank you much for it. Name a time when you wish us to depart, and so it shall be." To this the polite Monarch replied again, "I do not wish you to go but at your own time" (meaning, he did not wish to hurry them away). "Take the time that seems to you necessary; and when you do go, I will give to you, Cortes, two loads of gold, and one to each of your companions." By the time that the conversation had advanced thus far, an excellent excuse for delay occurred to Cortes. "You are already well aware, my Lord," he said, "how I destroyed my ships when I first landed in your territory. And so now we have need of other ships in order to return to our own country. Wherefore, I should be obliged if you would give us workmen to cut and work the wood. I myself have ship-builders; and when the ships are built, we will take our departure. Inform your deities and your vassals of this." Montezuma assented. Cortes was provided with Mexican workmen who

Excuse of Cortes for delay.

were sent to Vera Cruz under Spanish officers, and the building of ships was commenced in earnest, though it is highly improbable that Cortes had the slightest intention of taking his departure in them.

It has been said that Cortes told Montezuma on this occasion that he would have to accompany the Spaniards in order to be presented to the King of Spain; but the whole course of the narrative contradicts this statement, and it would have been perfect madness in Cortes at this juncture to make Montezuma so desperate as such a threat would infallibly have made him. Cortes no doubt relied upon palliatives and delays, in the hope of receiving, in the meantime, succour from home. Throughout the interview, according to the accounts given of it by the two historians who ought to have known most, it is discernible that the tone of the Mexican king towards Cortes was altered from that which it had been. He is even reported to have said that it was not "words but deeds" that he wanted.* The Spanish soldiers

Montezuma's bearing towards Cortes changed.

* "Dixo que le daria los carpinteros, y que luego despachasse; y no huviesse las palabras, sino obras."

appreciated the danger of their position, and went about much depressed (*muy pensativos*), and fully on their guard against any sudden attack. Indeed, this little body of men lived in their armour, and formed such habits of wariness, that years of peace and lordship could not efface the watchful customs which they had acquired at this eventful period of their lives, so that one of them afterwards describes how he could never pass a night in bed, but must get up, and walk about in the open air, and gaze at the stars.*

If such were the feelings of the common men, what must have been those of their commander? What agonies of sleepless indecision must have beset his couch, unless, indeed, he were composed of different material from that of other men? A slight disturbance in the street, a momentary out-

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—Cap. 108. And Gomara says that Cortes remarked the change:—"No le pareció, que le recibia con el talento que otras veces."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 94.

* "Y otra cosa digo, que no puedo dormir, sino un rato de la noche, que me tengo de levantar á ver el cielo y estrellas, y me he de passear un rato al sereno, y esto sin poner en la cabeça el bonete, ni paño, ni cosa ninguna."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 108.

break of fanaticism, a quarrel in the market-place between some Tlascalan and some Mexican—and the fires of discord, once aroused, might spread throughout the city, consume the little band of Spaniards and their allies, and prevent a great conquest from being fulfilled. Then would the name and fame of Cortes be no more than those of some of the early adventurers in discovery and conquest who fill up the trenches over which wiser or more fortunate men march to the accomplishment of great designs.

Danger of a sudden outbreak.

It was not, however, by any enemies in the city of Mexico that the fortunes of Cortes were next to be assailed. He had entered Mexico on the 8th of November, of the year 1519: it was now the beginning of May, 1520; and, in these few months, he had accomplished more than any conqueror, before him or after him, ever did with so small a force at his command. Meanwhile he had heard nothing from Cuba or from the mother country; and it was certain that whatever should come, either in the way of news or of supplies, would prove a considerable succour or a great hindrance. A few days after the unpleasant interview with Montezuma, above recorded, he

received intelligence of a most important and perplexing event; namely, that eighteen ships had arrived in the Bay of San Juan, not far from his little colony at Vera Cruz. The alarming news (alarming on account of the number of the vessels) was confirmed by a letter he received from a Spaniard whom he had appointed to watch that coast.* This slight circumstance affords a striking instance of the foresight of Cortes; and then the thoughtless exclaim, such persons are fortunate! Cortes instantly despatched messengers in different directions to gain further intelligence about these vessels. Fifteen days passed without any messenger returning—fifteen days of terrible anxiety for Cortes. At last Montezuma communicated to the Spanish General, that he was aware of the arrival of these new comers, and that they had disembarked in the port of San Juan. Moreover, the Monarch was able to show Cortes a picture of the forces that had disembarked, which

Unwelcome news for Cortes.

Landing of an armament on the coast of New Spain.

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* "Me trajo una Carta de un Español, que yo tenia puesto en la Costa, para que si Navíos veniessen, les diesse razon de mí, y de aquella Villa, que allí estaba cerca de aquel Puerto, porque no se perdiessen."—Lorenzana, p. 116.

consisted of eighty horses, eight hundred men, and ten or twelve cannon. The messengers who brought this news to Mexico added a piece of intelligence very significant of evil for Cortes; namely, that the messengers whom he had sent were with the newly-arrived strangers, and that the General would not let them come away.

There was now no excuse for Cortes to delay his return on account of the want of vessels, and so, it is said, Montezuma intimated; but it is probable that if the King felt any joy at this opportunity of getting rid of an enemy, or at least of a very importunate friend, he also had a terrible apprehension that the arrival of this additional force from Spain boded no good to himself. On the day when this intelligence was communicated, Montezuma and Cortes dined together, and were particularly gracious to each other; but dismay and apprehension waited unbidden at the board, and leavened alike the smiles of the timid Monarch and of the crafty General.*

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* I have no doubt, however, that, like most wise men, Cortes knew how to postpone his anxieties as much as possible; and that, whatever the delicate Indian King

Cortes sends Father Olmedo to the General of the armament.

Cortes lost no time in despatching Father Olmedo with a letter to his newly-arrived countrymen, in which he informed their General, whoever he might be, of what had happened since his own arrival in the country, of the towns he had gained and pacified, and of the treasures which he had in charge for the King of Spain. He then demanded on what authority this General came, and whether he were in need of anything? The good Father departed, and it is conjectured that he carried inducements of a very solid kind to be distributed amongst the subordinates of the General, in case he should prove intractable.

I do not doubt that the fears of Cortes predominated over his hopes. He had left too much hostility behind him, not to have great occasion for fear upon any arrival of his countrymen. His fears were justified. This formidable armament was sent by his former master, and now bitter

The armament was sent by Velazquez.

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might do, Cortes was sure to make a good dinner. His appetite, like that of most great men who exert their minds, was very vigorous.—"Fué mui gran comedor. í templado en el beber, teniendo abundancia."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 238. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2.

enemy, the Governor of Cuba. It originally consisted of nineteen ships, carrying fourteen hundred foot soldiers, eighty horsemen, twenty pieces of cannon, and a hundred and sixty muskets and cross-bows; but the Mexican painters were right in describing eighteen vessels only, for one had been lost at sea. This considerable force had been entrusted to a general of some experience, Pamphilo de Narvaez, and his instructions were to seize Cortes and his companions. The danger to Cortes was imminent.

Pamphilo de Narvaez its commander.

But Narvaez was quite another man from Cortes, and proceeded at once to such extremities, as probably to weaken his influence over his own men, and even to cause a protestation to be made from an important personage in the fleet, the Licentiate Ayllon, whom, however, he put into confinement and sent away. Narvaez sent a flattering message to Montezuma, telling him that he would release him, and that he came to seize upon Cortes. He also sought to gain the garrison at Vera Cruz, but they were true to their Commander. Not so the Cempoalans, in whose town Narvaez took up his quarters. They very naturally took part with the larger force;

His proceedings against Cortes.

and, as Cortes remarks, desired to be on the conquering side, being prepared to shout "Long life to whoever may be victorious."

Cortes quits Mexico to confront Narvaez.

It was time for Cortes to appear upon the scene of greatest danger. Accordingly, leaving Alvarado in command, and taking with him only seventy of his own men, Cortes commended those whom he left and his treasures to Montezuma's good offices, as to one who was a faithful vassal to the King of Spain.* This parting speech seems most audacious, but a plenary audacity was part of the wisdom of Cortes. At Cholula he came up with his lieutenant, Juan Velazquez and his men; joined company with them; and pushed on towards Cempoala. When he approached the town, he prepared to make an attack by night on the position which Narvaez occupied, and which was no other than the great temple of Cempoala. Cortes and his men knew the position well. Narvaez must, I think, have

* "Que mirase, que él era Vasallo de Vuestra Alteza, y que agora habia de recibir mercedes de Vuestra Magestad por los Servicios, que le habia hecho."—Lorenzana, p. 123.

displaced the gods, for he occupied three or four of the towers of the temple. This distribution of his forces was fatal to him.

Nature of the attack on Narvaez.

On the other side the plan was, that sixty young men, chosen for their activity, should make themselves masters of the cannon; and then that Sandoval, one of the bravest lieutenants of Cortes, should make an attack upon the tower where Narvaez was to be found. Round this tower eighteen large cannon were placed, but so prompt was the attack, that though it did not find the enemy unprepared, there was not time to fire more than four of the guns, and for the most part the shots went over the heads of the attacking party. The artillery being thus disposed of, Sandoval succeeded in forcing his way up the tower, and capturing Narvaez. Meanhile Cortes held the base; and the enemy, who do not seem to have been very willing or expert, and who supposed that their Commander had fallen, were mastered so speedily and so effectually, that Cortes had but three men killed and Narvaez but fifteen. During the action, the moon, as if she had been a partizan of Cortes and was weary of looking down upon the horrid sacri-

Narvaez defeated.

fices which he was endeavouring to put an end to, withdrew herself behind the clouds, and suffered the Narvaez faction, new to the land, to believe that certain luminous creatures (*cocayos*) were the glittering of numerous muskets in the hands of the Cortesians. No sooner, however, was the action decided, than she came forth in all her splendour, to illustrate and honour the victory.

In the encounter Narvaez lost an eye: he was afterwards sent as a prisoner to Vera Cruz. His men, not without resistance on the part of some of them, ultimately ranged themselves under the banner of Cortes; and thus was a great danger* turned into a welcome succour. Cortes received the conquered troops in the most winning manner, and created an enthusiasm in his favour. One of the soldiers of Narvaez, a negro and a comical fellow, danced and shouted for joy, crying,

Narvaez's men attach themselves to Cortes.

* How great the danger was, may be appreciated by "the winning words full of promise" which Cortes uttered in his speech to the men previous to the attack. For those who have time to study history minutely, the speech is well worth referring to. It was made on horseback, and therefore was not long.—See Bernal Diaz, cap. 122.

"Where are the Romans who with such small numbers have ever achieved so great a victory?"

The first thought of Cortes was to divide his troops; for, as the vanquished far outnumbered the victors, some disturbance might easily occur, and the men of Narvaez could not yet be relied upon as firm adherents. Cortes accordingly employed two hundred Spaniards in founding a town at Coatzacualco, the same spot to which he had before sent an expedition. He also despatched two hundred men to Vera Cruz, where he had given orders that the vessels should be transported; and two hundred he sent to another place. His next care was to despatch a messenger to Mexico, to give an account of his victory, of which, at his suggestion, a painted representation* was sent to Montezuma by the Indians of Cempoala.

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* "Aviendo pintado en un Lienço lo que pasaba, á Narvaez herido, y aprisionado, la Gente rendida; á Cortes Victorioso, y apoderado de la Artillería."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. iv. cap. 66.

## CHAPTER VII.

*During the absence of Cortes the Mexicans rebel—Siege of the Spanish garrison—Cortes returns to Mexico.*

Spanish garrison besieged by the Mexicans.

IN fourteen days after the defeat of Narvaez the messenger of Cortes returned to him, bringing from Alvarado the unexpected and unwelcome intelligence, that the Spanish garrison in Mexico were besieged by the citizens, and were in the utmost peril; and that the Indians had set fire to the Spanish quarters in many places, and undermined them. Much of the provisions, he added, had been taken by the enemy; the four brigantines had been burnt; and although the combat had ceased, the Spaniards were in a state of siege. Finally, Alvarado implored Cortes, for the love of God, to lose no time in succouring them. The causes of this outbreak

urnish a curious illustration of Mexican habits nd practices, and require to be told at some ength.

It is seldom that the religion of a people is so ıtimately connected with its warfare as to form art of the same story, but in the case of the lexicans, transactions of the highest military nportance grew out of the proceedings at reli- ous festivals. This is a felicity for the narrative, it takes these religious ceremonies, which con- ituted so large a part of the life of the people, ıt of the list of mere description of manners and litical customs, and brings them naturally into e course of events.

The month Toxcatl, in which Cortes was ab- ıt from Mexico, was the especial month devoted religious services. It corresponded nearly with e period of Easter; "as if," says the pious monk* m whom we learn these particulars, "the Devil shed to imitate the Christian festival of Easter order to forget or dissemble the grief which the ristian commemoration caused him."

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* Torquemada, "Monarquía Indiana."

Great festival to Tezcatlipuk.

The Mexican divinity who was chiefly honoured in this month was Tezcatlipuk, and the mode of honouring him was as follows. Ten days before the chief day of the festival, a priest sallied forth from the temple, clad after the fashion of the idol, with flowers in his hand, and with a little flute made of clay, of a very shrill pitch. This priest, having turned first to the east, sounded his flute; then he turned to the west, and did the same thing; then to the north, and then to the south. Having thus signified that he called upon the attention of all mankind, and required them to celebrate worthily this festival, he remained in silence for a time. Then he placed his hand on the ground, and taking some earth in it, put it in his mouth and ate it, as a token of humility and adoration. All who heard him did the same thing; and, with the most energetic demonstrations of grief and entreaty, implored the obscurity of night and the wind not to desert them nor forget them, but to deliver them immediately from the troubles of life, and carry them to the place of rest,* "as if," adds the indignant monk, "the

* "Invocando á la obscuridad de la noche, y al viento (ceremonia propria de Gentiles, como leemos averlo hecho

accursed one could give that which in truth he does not possess for himself."

At the sound of this little flute, which seems as if it represented for them the "still small voice" of conscience, all sinners became very sorrowful and much afraid; and during the ten days that this lasted, their constant prayer to Tezcatlipuk was, that their faults should be hidden from the eyes and the knowledge of men, and pardoned by his gracious clemency.* There is a strange wisdom sometimes in these barbarous rites; and here we have an instance of that just fear of the intolerance of his fellow-man (who, moreover, is obliged to pretend to be worse in this respect than he is) which leads the sinner to confide in God, and to fear his fellow-creatures.

At the sound of the flute sinners became sorrowful.

Every day this ceremony of the flute was con-

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quella Reina de Cartago, en la celebracion de su muerte, Sacrificio) y rogábanles con ahinco, que no los desamparasen, ni olvidasen, ó que los librasen presto de los trabajos de la Vida, y los llevasen al lugar del descanso." TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. x. cap. 14.

* "No pedian otra cosa á este Dios, sino que fuesen sus delitos ocultos de los ojos, y sabiduría de los Hombres, perdonados de su misericordia, y clemencia."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. x. cap. 14.

tinued, and every day there were similar manifestations of sorrow and penitence, "although," as the monk remarks, with but a shallow reading of the heart of man (for there may be all the anguish of remorse for sin without a thought of the penalty), "this grief of theirs was only for corporal punishment which their gods gave them, and not for eternal punishment, for they did not believe that in another life there was a punishment so strict as the Faith teaches us; which, if they had believed, so many of them would not have offered themselves so willingly to death as they did offer themselves, but would have been afraid of the torments which they have to endure for ever."* This remark (of the readiness of the Mexicans to encounter death) is well worthy of notice, as it tends a little to exculpate their practice of human sacrifice; and one is glad, for the sake of human

Readiness of Mexicans to die.

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* "Aunque este dolor de ellos, no era sino por la pena corporal, que les daban, y no por la eterna, por no tener creído que en la otra vida huviese pena tan estrecha, como nos la enseña la Fé: que á creerlo, no se ofrecieran tantos de su voluntad á la muerte, como se ofrecian, con temor de los tormentos, que avian de pasar perdurablemente."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. x. cap. 14.

nature, to find anything which tends to explain hat form of atrocity.

The ten days having thus passed, the eve before the festival arrived, when the Mexican lords rought new vestments for the idol, and adorned im with feathers, bracelets, and other ornaments, he old ones being put away in a chest, and much onoured. Then the priests drew aside the curain which was at the entrance of the chapel where ne idol stood, and showed it to the assembled eople. After this, a priest of great authority ame forth with roses in his hand and sounded ne little flute with the same ceremony as on the receding days.

New vestments for Tezcatlipuk.

On the ensuing morning, the great day of the stival having now come, the priests brought out splendid litter, put the idol upon it; and, taking e burden upon their shoulders, carried it down the foot of the steps of the great temple. Then me all the youths and maidens who were deted to the service of the temple, bearing a thick pe made of strings of roasted maize, with which ey performed a circuit round the litter. This

The main object of the festival.

rope was called after the month Toxcatl, and was symbol of sterility (Toxcatl meaning a "dr thing"); and the whole drift of the ceremon was to implore Tezcatlipuk, their Jupiter, to giv them gracious rain from heaven.

They placed a similar string of maize upon th neck of the idol, and a garland of the same materi upon his head. All the youths and maidens wer beautifully dressed, and were adorned with gar lands of maize. The chief men of the city wor ornaments of the same kind, having these garland on their heads and necks, and in their hands nose gays of the same material very curiously con structed.*

Everywhere, upon the ground, were scattere the thorns of the aloe, in order that devout peopl might shed their blood in honour of the day.

Then commenced a grand procession, the ido being carried in front, with two priests con tinually incensing it; and, as they threw th incense on high, they prayed that their petition

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* "Y en las manos Ramilletes de lo mismo, que so de grande ingenio, y curiosidad."—TORQUEMADA, M *narquía Indiana*, lib. x. cap. 14.

might go up to heaven like as the smoke ascended.

So far all was innocent enough; but now came the saddest and strangest part of the ceremony. For a year previous to the day of festival, a youth had been chosen, the most beautiful and graceful amongst the captives, who was called the Image of Tezcatlipuk. The youth was instructed in all the arts of gracious courtesy;* and, as he passed along the street, beautifully adorned, and accompanied by the greatest personages, all who met him fell on their knees before him and adored him, while he responded with graciousness to their adorations.

Choice of a victim.

Twenty days before this Festival they gave him four wives, and taking off the robes which he had worn in imitation of their god, Tezcatipuk, they clothed him in the handsomest dresses that a man amongst the Mexicans could wear.

For these twenty days he lived in all joy and felicity with his wives, and if there were any

His transient felicity.

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* "Le enseñaban todo primor, y suma cortesía en el hablar."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. x. cap. 7.

satirists in Mexico, it is probable that they pronounced these marriages to be the happiest ever known in that beautiful Venice of the western world; but if happy, a dreadful happiness it must have been. The five days before the Festival were spent in festivities in honour of the victim, at which all the Mexican court were his companions, save the King himself, who alone stood apart, and kept his state.*

But those days of fierce and transient felicity were now over; the procession was ended; then came a banquet; which also being concluded, the great event of the day took place. The poor youth came forward on the summit of the temple, and made a dignified bow to the assembled people, resuming his representation of the majesty of Tezcatlipuk. Behind him stalked five murdering ministers of sacrifice, who threw

The sacrifice.

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* "Cinco dias ántes que muriese hacíanle Fiesta, y Banquetes, en lugares frescos, y deleitosos, en los quales Dias le acompañaban con mas concurso los Señores, y Principales, y casi toda la Corte, sino era el Rei, y Señor Supremo, que este, guardando su Autoridad, no le acompanaba."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. x. cap 14.

him upon the fatal stone, when the chief priest came forward with great reverence, opened the breast of the victim, and took out the heart.* The priests were wont to hurl down from the temple the bodies of the persons sacrificed, but on this occasion they carried the body down with much submission and reverence to the last step of the temple. It was then beheaded; and, according to the narrative, the body, as some sacred thing, was cooked and divided amongst the Mexican lords.

Lastly, there was a solemn dance in which the youths dedicated to Tezcatlipuk took a part. The great lords joined in this dance,† and thus the Festival was ended. Conclusion of festival.

In ordinary years this poor devoted youth was the only person sacrificed; but every fourth year,

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* "Llegaba el Summo Sacerdote con grande reverencia, y abríale el pecho, y sacaba el coraçon, y hacia con él la ceremonia acostumbrada."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. x. cap. 14.

† It is to be noted that this dance was celebrated in a place set apart for that purpose, ("En un lugar particular, y consagrado para este proposito"—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. x. cap. 14), and apparently not in the great court of the temple.

which was considered a year of jubilee, several persons were added to the sacrifice.*

Such were the ceremonies, partly graceful but mostly horrible, which took place every year in the month of Toxcatl, and for leave to celebrate which the Mexican lords asked permission from

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* It is not very important to settle which of two false gods was the one whose day of festival was chosen by Alvarado for his attack upon the Mexican nobles. Some of the best authorities represent this transaction to have occurred on the festival of Huitzilopochtli, the Mexican god of war. But they may have been deceived by following Fr. Bernardino de Sahagun, whose accuracy, as regards any historical fact is not to be relied upon, and who, in the next sentence, makes a statement which is totally contrary to fact. "Motezuzoma mandó que se hiciese esta fiesta para dar contento á los Españoles."—*Hist. Universal de las cosas de Nueva-España.* KINGSBOROUGH, *Collection*, vol. vii. cap. 19.

Nearly the whole of the month of Toxcatl was devoted to religious festivals. The greatest festival, however, in the month, and the one that came first, was that in honour of Tezcatlipuk; and it seems to me almost inconceivable that Alvarado should have allowed this festival to be celebrated (in which there were large assemblages of people), and then that the Mexicans should have had occasion to ask permission for the holding of

Pedro de Alvarado, who, in the absence of Cortes, was the chief in command, and who had been called by the Mexicans "Tonatiuh," "the sun-faced man," as he was of a ruddy complexion.

The Mexicans ask permission of Alvarado to celebrate a festival.

Now Alvarado was a determined, rather than a wise man, and he was at present placed in very difficult circumstances, requiring both wisdom and forbearance. There can be no doubt that the

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the second festival. The Mexican historian, Ixtlilxochitl, merely describes the festival under the general head of Toxcatl, ("Pendant que Cortes était à la Vera Cruz, les Mexicains célébrèrent une de leurs principales fêtes nommée *Toxcatl*, qui tombait le jour de Pâques."—*Hist. des Chichimèques*, cap. 88. TERNAUX-COMPANS, *Voyages*) which would correspond better to the festival of the Mexican Jupiter (Tezcatlipuk) than to that of the Mexican Mars. See TORQUEMADA, lib. x. cap. 14.

In whatever way the question may be settled, and an alarming amount of learning might be expended upon it, I have preferred giving an account of the rites of the Mexican Jupiter in preference to those of the Mexican Mars, as the former are more curious and more significant.

In both cases there was a victim, a procession, and a solemn dance. The victim, however, in Jupiter's festival, was adored as a god during his year of preparation, while the victim to the god of war did not meet with that extraordinary honour.

Mexicans must have exhibited a changed bearing towards the Spaniards since the time of their arrival, and especially since the departure of Cortes. The Mexicans had found out that the Spaniards were mortal; they had discovered that horses were but animals; they had ascertained by the coming of Narvaez that the Spaniards were not united. Their wrongs were manifest. They saw the Spaniards grow richer day by day. They probably discerned that the offer of Cortes to quit the country was a mere pretence. But that which was the indignity of indignities in their eyes was the deposition of their deities, and the elevation of what they would consider as the Spanish gods.

Sentiments of the Mexicans at this period.

All these feelings would be more likely to be manifested, as the numbers of the Spaniards were diminished by the departure of the troop which accompanied Cortes; and it was a few days after that event that some of the Spaniards began to discern or to imagine, that the Indians did not show them that respect and veneration which they had been accustomed to receive.* In truth, no respect or love can fulfil

* "Pasados pocos Dias, empeçaron á notar algunos

the requirements of fear; but I think that in this case, it was a just fear, and that revolt, if not already resolved upon, was imminent. The historian Herrera says that many Indian women declared to the truth of this conspiracy, and "that from women the truth is always learnt."* I do not know how that may be, but it is clear that throughout the conquest of America the Indian women several times betrayed their country under circumstances which do not seem to me to indicate so much a love of truth as a love of what is personal and near, and an indifference to what is abstract and remote,—a disposition which has been noted equally of all women in all countries. In a word, they loved their Spanish lovers, and did not care much about their country; and, accordingly, on several critical occasions, betrayed

*Indian women betray the secrets of their countrymen.*

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spañoles, que los Indios no les tenian el respeto, y neracion, á que estaban acostumbrados, ántes de salir rtés de Mexico."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, . iv. cap. 66.

* "Pero la verdad fué, que pensaron matar los Castanos, para lo qual tenian sus armas escondidas en casas, cerca del templo; y esto afirmaron muchas geras, de las quales se sabia siempre la verdad."—RRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. II. lib. x. cap. 8.

the one to the other with a recklessness which would be inexcusable in the other sex, but which is to be accounted for, as above, in them. If there had been Spanish women in the invading armies, the Indians might have had a chance of learning something from them; but, as it was, the betrayal was necessarily all on one side.

The hereditary enemies of Mexico, the Tlascalans, no doubt, did what they could to deepen the impressions made on the Spaniards by the changed demeanour of the Mexicans. They were at hand to magnify every ill report, and to counsel any act of violence.

Alvarado's policy.

Alvarado resolved to strike a great blow; and mindful, perhaps, of the proverb, "He who attacks conquers" (*Quien acomete vence*),* resolved to take advantage of the Tezcatlipuk Festival, to surprise and slay a great number of the Mexican nobility. It is quite probable that this Festival was looked upon by the Spanish Commander with great suspicion, and even that the demeanour of the Indians during the early days of the Festival (which of course was not explained till long

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* See Bernal Diaz, cap. 125.

after by the researches of learned men) served to increase the Spanish suspicions.

I have no doubt that the horrid sacrifices in use among the Mexicans had made a deep impression on the Spanish soldiers; and that many a brave man, who would have faced death with unconcerned gallantry in the battle field, had an extreme dread of being offered up as a sacrifice to the idols with the unpronounceable names. We may be sure that alarming rumours, which have even found their way into grave history, were loudly current then amongst the soldiers,—such as that the Indian women had their cooking vessels ready to boil the bodies of the Spaniards in.* In the affairs of life, what is said and what is thought are almost of more importance than what is done. Most histories are too wise, concerning themselves too much with what really happened, and not taking heed enough of the wild reports and rumours which were nearly as good as facts for the time they were believed in.

The current reports of the day a great part of history.

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* "Indias tenian prevenidas, que cuidaban de Ollas, Tenas de su Brevage, para cocer á los Castellanos, y comérselos."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. iv. cap. 66.

Alvarado attacks the Mexicans at the festival.

It is, therefore, no matter of surprise to hear that when the sacred dance,* above described as the closing ceremony of the feast to the Mexican Jupiter, was being celebrated, Alvarado's troops made an onslaught upon the weaponless Mexican lords, and slew no less than six hundred of them. This atrocity, as might have been expected, was the signal for an instant outbreak on the part of the populace. Alvarado was not skilled, like his master Cortes, in the art of creating and maintaining terror; but, indeed, the slightest knowledge of the world might have told him, that such a wholesale massacre, destroying the chief men, and, therefore, the restraining power over the Mexican populace, would, so far from quelling revolt, be likely to give it ample breathing room. The little garrison of Spaniards, instead of being masters of the town, were instantly in the condition of a distressed and besieged party, and it would have gone very hard with them, if

The populace rise.

* Some authors have supposed that this dance was the one which they called Macevaliztli, which means "reward with labour" (merecimiento con trabajo). See Gomara, *Crónica de Nueva-España*, cap. 104. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. ii.

Montezuma had not endeavoured to make his furious subjects desist from the attack.* Montezuma interferes.

Such was the disastrous state of things communicated to Cortes in return for the tidings which he had sent to Mexico of his victory. Indeed, the life of Cortes was like a buoyant substance borne on a tumultuous sea: however, if it descended from the crest of one wave to the hollow of another, it did not remain depressed, but mounted up again; and, when the bystander turned to look, it was perhaps on the summit of a still higher and mightier wave than before. As may be imagined, he lost no time in seeking to repair the evils which had befallen the Spanish arms in Mexico. He recalled the expeditions which he had sent out; he addressed the former followers of Narvaez, showing them that here was an opportunity for service both honourable and lucrative; and, the instant necessity for action Cortes collects his forces.

* This is confirmed by three distinct authorities, each of great weight: Bernal Diaz, cap. 125; Ixtlilxochitl, *Histoire de Chichimèques*, part ii. cap. 88; Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*, and Cortes himself, Lorenzana, p. 31.

being an immediate bond of union amongst brave men,* he forthwith commenced his march for the capital. At Tlascala, all was friendly to him; he there reviewed his men, and found that they amounted to thirteen hundred soldiers, amongst whom were ninety-six horsemen, eighty cross-bowmen, and about eighty musketeers.† Cortes marched with great strides to Mexico, and entered the city at the head of this formidable force on the 24th of June, 1520, the day of John the Baptist.

Marches rapidly to Mexico, June, 1520.

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* "En esta tan urgente necesidad, Amigos, y no Amigos, con gran voluntad se le ofrecieron, y se armaron los que no lo estaban."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. iv. c. 67.

† Accounts vary very much about the number of these forces; the one adopted here is from Bernal Diaz.

# CHAPTER VIII.

*The Reception of Cortes in Mexico—General attack upon the Spanish Quarters—Flight from Mexico to Tlacuba —Battle of Otumba—Cortes returns to Tlascala.*

VERY different was the reception of Cortes on this occasion from that on his first entry into Mexico, when Montezuma had gone forth with all pomp to meet him. Now the Indians stood silently in the doorways of their houses, and the bridges between the houses were taken up.* Even when he arrived at his own quarters, he found the gates barred, so strict had been the siege; and he had to demand an entry. Alvarado appeared upon the battlements, and asked

Cortes' reception.

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* "Veiron las puentes de unas casas á otras, quitadas, otras malas señales."—HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, om. II. dec. ii. lib. x. cap. 8.

if Cortes came in the same liberty with which he went out, and if he was still their General. Cortes replied "Yes," that he came with victory, and with increased forces. The gates were then opened, and Cortes and his companions entered. He had to hear the excuses of Alvarado for conduct which a prudent man like Cortes must have disapproved, but which he did not dare to punish then. His aspect was gloomy, and one who must have seen him that day, describes him by an epithet which, in the original meaning, was exceedingly applicable. Bernal Diaz says that Cortes was *mohino*, an adjective which is applied to one who plays in a game against many others.

The alternation of success and disappointment seems for once to have tried the equal temper and patient mind of the Spanish General. He sent a cold, or an uncourteous, message to Montezuma, the foolishness of which he seems afterwards to have been well aware of, and, with the candour of a great man about his own errors, to have acknowledged.*

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* "Muchos han dicho, aver oydo dezir a Hernando Cortés, que si en llegando visitara á Motezuma, sus cosas

At the moment, however, Cortes could give but little attention to anything save the pressing wants of the garrison. He lodged his own men in their old quarters, and placed in the great temple the additional forces he had brought with him. The next morning he sent out a messenger to Vera Cruz, probably with a view to ascertain how he would be received in the streets of Mexico; but not more than half an hour elapsed before the messenger returned, being wounded, and crying out that all the citizens were in revolt, and that the drawbridges were raised.

Cortes sends out a messenger to Vera Cruz,

Who is driven back.

Before Cortes despatched this messenger, he had sent a threatening message to Montezuma, desiring him to give orders for the attendance of the people in the market-place, in order that the Spaniards might be able to buy provisions. Montezuma's reply was, that he and the greater part of his servants were prisoners, and that Cortes should set free and send out whomsoever he wished to entrust with the execution

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assaran bien: y que lo dexó estimándole en poco, por allarse tan poderoso."—HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, ec. II. lib. x. cap. 8.

of the necessary orders. Cortes chose for this purpose Montezuma's brother, the Lord of Iztapalapa; but when that Prince came among the citizens, his message was not listened to, and he was not permitted by the people to return, but was chosen as their leader.

Montezuma's brother chosen by the citizens as their leader.

After the return of the messenger whom Cortes had sent out to Vera Cruz, the Mexicans advanced in great numbers towards the Spanish quarters, and commenced an attack upon them. Cortes, who was not given to exaggeration of statement, says that neither the strects nor the terraced roofs (*azoteas*) were visible, being entirely obscured by the people who were upon them; that the multitude of stones was so great, that it seemed as if it rained stones; and that the arrows came so thickly, that the walls and the courts were full of them, rendering it difficult to move about. Cortes made two or three desperate sallies, and was wounded. The Mexicans succeeded in setting fire to the fortress, which was with difficulty subdued, and they would have scaled the walls at the point where the fire had done most damage, but for a large force of cross-bowmen, musketeers, and artillery, which Cortes threw forward to meet the

The Mexicans attack the garrison.

danger. The Mexicans at last drew back, leaving no fewer than eighty Spaniards wounded in this first encounter.

The ensuing morning, as soon as it was daylight, the attack was renewed. There was no occasion for the artillerymen to take any particular aim, for the Mexicans advanced in such dense masses, that they could not be missed.* The gaps made in these masses were instantly filled up again; and practised veterans in the Spanish army, who had served in Italy, in France, and against the grand Turk, declared that they had never seen men close up their ranks as these Mexicans did after the discharges of artillery upon them.† Again, and with considerable success,

Distinguished bravery of the Mexican troops.

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* "Los Artilleros no tenian necesidad de puntería, sino asestar en los Esquadrones de los Indios."—Lorenzana, p. 135.

† "Porque unos tres ó quatro soldados que se avian hallado en Italia, que allí estavan con nosotros, juraron muchas vezes á Dios, que guerras tan bravosas jamas avian visto en algunas que se avian hallado entre Christianos, y contra la artillería del Rey de Francia, ni del gran Turco; ni gente, como aquellos Indios, con tanto animo cerrar los esquadrones vieron."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 126.

Cortes made sallies from the fortress in the course of the day; but at the end of it there were about sixty more of his men to be added to the list of wounded, already large, from the injuries received on the preceding day.

Cortes constructs moveable fortresses.

The third day was devoted by the ingenious Cortes to constructing three moveable fortresses, called *mantas*, which, he thought, would enable his men, with less danger, to contend against the Mexicans on their terraced roofs.* Each of these little fortresses afforded shelter for twenty persons; and was manned with cross-bowmen, musketeers, pike-men, and labourers who carried pick-axes and bars of iron for piercing through the houses, and destroying the barricades in the streets. As may be imagined, the besiegers did not look on idly, and the combat did not cease while these machines were being made.

Montezuma comes forth to address the people.

It was on this day that the unfortunate Montezuma, either at the request of Cortes, or of his own accord, came out upon a battlement, and addressed the people. He was surrounded by

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* A private house in Mexico was often a little fortress in itself, and could not easily be destroyed.

Spanish soldiers, and was at first received with all respect and honour by his people. When silence ensued, he addressed them in very loving words, bidding them discontinue the attack, and assuring them that the Spaniards would depart from Mexico. It is not probable that much of his discourse could have been heard by the raging multitude. But, on the other hand, he was able to hear what their leaders had to say, as four of the chiefs approached near to him, and with tears addressed him, declaring their grief at his imprisonment. They told him that they had chosen his brother as their leader, that they had vowed to their gods not to cease fighting until the Spaniards were all destroyed, and that each day they prayed to their gods to keep him free and harmless. They added, that when their designs were accomplished, he should be much more their lord than heretofore, and that he should then pardon them. Amongst the crowd, however, were, doubtless, men who viewed the conduct of Montezuma with intense disgust, or who thought that they had already shown too much disrespect towards him ever to be pardoned. A shower of stones and arrows interrupted the parley; the

Speech of four of his lords.

He is wounded.

Spanish soldiers had ceased for the moment to protect Montezuma with their shields; and he was severely wounded in the head and in two other places. The miserable Monarch was borne away, having received his death-stroke, but whether it came from the wounds themselves, or from the indignity of being thus treated by his people, remains a doubtful point. It seems, however, that, to use some emphatic words which have been employed upon a similar occasion,

He dies.

"He turned his face to the wall and would be troubled no more."

It is remarkable that he did not die a Christian,* and I think this shows that he had more

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* I am not ignorant that it has been asserted that Montezuma received the rite of baptism at the hands of his Christian captors.—See Bustamante's notes on Chimalpain's Translation of Gomara (*Historia de las Conquistas de Hernando Cortés.* Carlos Maria de Bustamante. Mexico, 1826, p. 287.) But the objections raised by Torquemada—the silence of some of the best authorities, such as Oviedo, Ixtlilxochitl, "Histoire des Chichimèques," and of Cortes himself; and, on the other hand, the distinctly opposing testimony of Bernal Diaz (see cap. 127), and the statement of Herrera, who asserts that Montezuma, at the hour of his death, refused to

force of mind and purpose than the world has generally been inclined to give him credit for. To read Montezuma's character rightly, at this distance of time, and amidst such a wild perplexity of facts, would be very difficult, and is not very important. But one thing, I think, is discernible, and that is, that his manners were very gracious and graceful. I dwell upon this, because, I conceive, it was a characteristic of the race; and no one will estimate this characteristic lightly, who has observed how very rare, even in the centres of civilized life, it is to find people of fine manners, so that in great capitals but very few persons can be pointed out, who are at all transcendent in this respect. The gracious delight which Montezuma had in giving was particularly noticeable;* and the impression which

His grand politeness.

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quit the religion of his fathers ("No se queria apartar de la Religion de sus Padres."—*Hist. de las Indias*, dec. II. lib. x. cap. 10), convince me that no such baptism took place.

* "Fué dadivoso, i mui franco con Españoles, í creo que tambien con los suios, cá si fuera Arte, y no por Natura, facilmente se le conociera al dár en el semblante, que los que dan de mala gana, mucho descubren el cara-

he made upon Bernal Diaz may be seen in the narrative of this simple soldier, who never speaks of him otherwise than as "the great Montezuma," and, upon the occasion of his death, remarks that some of the Spanish soldiers who had known him mourned for him, as if he had been a father, "and no wonder," he adds, "seeing that he was so good."* Cortes sent out the body to the new King, and Montezuma was mourned over by the Spaniards, to whom he had always been gracious, and probably by his own people; but little could be learnt of what the Mexicans thought, or did, upon the occasion, by the Spaniards, who only saw that Montezuma's death made no difference in the fierceness of the enemy's attack.

On the day when Montezuma addressed the people, Cortes held a conference with some of the opposing chiefs, who declared that the only basis on which they would treat, was that the

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çon."—Gomara, *Cronica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 107. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. ii.

* "É hombres huvo entre nosotros de los que le conociamos y tratavamos, que tan llorado fué, como si fuera nuestro padre: y no nos hemos de maravillar dello, viendo que tan bueno era."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 126.

Spaniards should quit the city; otherwise, they said, they themselves would all have to die, or to put an end to the Spaniards. Such a basis of peace not being at all acceptable to Cortes, he next tried the effect of the *mantas*. These were advanced against the walls of some of the *azoteas*, being well supported from behind by four cannon, by a party of Spanish cross-bowmen and common soldiers, and by three thousand of the Tlascalan allies. But all their efforts were without avail. As for the cavalry, it could do nothing, as the horses could not keep their footing for a moment on the polished tesselated pavement. Indeed, the numbers and the vigour of the enemy were so great, that the Spaniards could not gain a single step; finally, they were obliged to give way, and the Indians occupied the square of the temple. There, five hundred of the principal persons, as they appeared to Cortes, posted themselves on the summit of the great temple: they were well-provisioned; and, being close to the fortress, could do it much harm. The Spaniards made two or three attempts to take this position, but were driven back each time, and some were wounded. Cortes saw that it would be necessary

Desperate resolve of the Mexicans.

A body of Mexicans occupy the summit of the great temple.

for him to make the attempt in person; and, accordingly, though wounded, he resolved to do so. He had his shield bound on to his arm (the wound being in the left hand), and having placed some of his troops at the base of the temple, he commenced the difficult ascent. The Spaniards succeeded in gaining the summit, and, after a terrible combat, in dislodging the Mexicans from that height, and driving them down upon the lower terraces. Then might be seen, flitting about the contest, like some obscene and hideous birds of prey, the priests of the temple, with their long black veils streaming in the wind,—the blood flowing from their clotted hair and lacerated ears, as on a day of sacrifice,—now transported by wrath at the desecration of their shrines, now animated by the expectation of fresh victims, and throughout supported in their ecstasy by the hope of some great manifestation on the part of their false deities. But the Mexican god of war could not, even at this critical period of his and their existence, instruct his worshippers how to hurl down, at the right inclination, the large beams which they had carried up to the temple, and which, if justly aimed, would have fatally discon-

Cortes dislodges the enemy from the temple.

certed the Spanish attack. The fight, which must have been one of the most picturesque on record, lasted three hours; and, to use the words of Bernal Diaz, "Cortes there showed himself to be a very valiant man, as he always was."* The Spaniards lost forty men; but they succeeded in

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* "Aquí se mostró Cortés mui varon, como síempre lo fué."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 126. De Solis says that two patriotic Mexicans approached Cortes in an attitude of supplication, and then sprang upon him, and endeavoured to throw themselves downwards from the temple with him; but that Cortes burst from them and saved himself, while they were dashed to pieces on the pavement of the court-yard below. Upon this story Clavigero remarks, "The very humane gentlemen Raynal and Robertson, moved to pity, as it appears, by the peril of Cortes (Gli umanissimi Signori Raynal, e Robertson mossi a pietà, per quanto appare, pel pericolo de Cortès), have provided some kind of unknown battlements and iron rails, by which he saved himself until he got clear of the Mexicans; but neither did the Mexicans ever make iron rails, nor had that temple any battlements. It is wonderful that these authors, so incredulous concerning what is attested by the Spanish and Indian writers, should yet believe what is neither to be found among the ancient authors, nor probable in itself." —See Clavigero, *Storia Antica del Messico*, tom. iii. lib. ix. p. 128; see also the English Translation, vol. ii. p. 108.

putting every one of the Mexicans to the sword. We learn from the account of this battle something of the form of the temple. It appears that there were three or four terraces of some width, besides the main platform at the top.* Some of the Mexicans were hurled from the top of the temple to the bottom; others, again, as above described, were dislodged, and made a second stand upon one of these terraces. The difficulty of gaining the little tower, where the idols stood, was so great, that Cortes looks upon his success as owing to a special interposition of Providence.† The idols, it appears, had been reinstated; but the triumph of Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipuk was but of short duration; for Cortes set fire to these hideous images, and to the tower in which they

Form of the temple.

Cortes sets fire to the idols.

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* "Arriba peleámos con ellos tanto, que les fué forzado saltar de ella abajo á unas azoteas, que tenia al derredor, tan anchas como un paso. É de estas tenia la dicha Torre, tres, ó quatro, tan altas la una de la otra como tres estados."—LORENZANA, p. 138.

† "Y crea Vuestra Sacra Magestad, que fué tanto ganalles esta Torre, que si Dios no les quebrara las alas, bastaban veinte de ellos para resistir la subida á mil Hombres, como quiera que pelearon muy valientemente, hasta que murieron."—LORENZANA, p. 139.

had their abode. Certainly, the great temple was a place of ill-omen for the Mexicans to fight upon; and the blood of slaughtered thousands might well rise up to testify against them on that day.

This fight in the temple gave a momentary gleam of success to the arms of the Spaniards, and afforded Cortes an opportunity to resume negotiations. But the determination of the Mexicans was fixed and complete. It was in vain that the Spanish General pressed them to consider the havoc which he daily made amongst their citizens, and the injury he was doing to their beautiful city. They replied, that they were well aware of the mischief which the Spaniards were doing, and of the slaughter they were causing amongst the Mexican people; but, nevertheless, they were determined that they would all perish, if that were needful, to gain their point of destroying the Spaniards. They bade Cortes look at the streets, the squares, and the terraces, covered with people; and then, in a business-like and calculating manner, they told him that if twenty-five thousand of them were to die for each Spaniard,

Determination of the Mexicans.

They calculate the relative value of a Spaniard's life.

still the Spaniards would perish first.* They urged triumphantly that all the causeways were destroyed, and that the Spaniards had few provisions left, and very little water, so that they would die of hunger and thirst, if from nothing else. "In truth," says Cortes, "they had much reason in what they said, for if we had no other enemy to fight against but hunger, it was sufficient to destroy us all in a short time."

The conference ended in a discouraging manner for the Spaniards; but Cortes revived the spirits of himself and his men by a sally which he made at nightfall, and in which the Spaniards succeeded in burning more than three hundred houses. This, however, did but little good, as it only rendered three hundred families desperate.

The Mexicans had exaggerated the damage, when they spoke of all the causeways being destroyed. The one to Tlacuba, though much injured, still remained. Indeed, in the course of

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* "Que á morir veinte y cinco mil de ellos, y uno de los nuestros, nos acabariamos nosotros primero."—LORENZANA, p. 139.

the next day, when Cortes turned his whole attention in that direction, securing the bridges,




and filling up the gaps that had been made, destroying the barricades, and burning the houses and towers which commanded this causeway, he

succeeded in making it passable for that day; and with some of his men, absolutely did reach the terra firma, in a charge that they made upon the enemy. But the Mexicans redoubling their efforts, Cortes with difficulty regained the fortress; and, at the end of a day of continued fighting, the Mexicans claimed the victory, and had made themselves masters of several of the bridges.

It generally requires at least as much courage to retreat as to advance. Indeed, few men have the courage and the ready wisdom to retreat in time. But Cortes, once convinced that his position in Mexico was no longer tenable, wasted no time or energy in parleying with danger. Terror had lost its influence with the Mexicans, and superior strategy was of little avail against such overpowering numbers. Moreover, strategy, when there is hunger in the camp, is no longer uncontrolled in its movements, and is subject to other laws than those of the science which ought to guide it.

Cortes resolves to quit Mexico.

Cortes resolved to quit the city that night. His men had long wished for him to come to this

conclusion; and an astrologer of the name of Botello, of whom it was said that he had a familiar spirit, had discovered by his divinations, and declared four nights before, that if they did not depart on that very night, no one of them would escape alive.

Preparations for departure were instantly commenced. A pontoon was constructed of wood, and intrusted to fifty Spanish soldiers and four hundred Tlascalans, the Spanish soldiers being all chosen men, bound by an oath to die rather than desert their pontoon. To convey the artillery, fifty Spanish soldiers and two hundred and fifty Tlascalans were appointed, while the prisoners, together with that important person, Donna Marina, were intrusted to an escort of three hundred Tlascalans and thirty Spanish soldiers.

Preparations for departure.

The main divisions of the army were arranged as follows. The brave Sandoval was intrusted with the vanguard. The baggage, the prisoners, and the artillery were to come next. Pedro de Alvarado was to bring up the rear-guard, consisting in great part of the troops of Narvaez. Cortes, with a few horsemen and one hundred foot soldiers, was to assist in the passage of the

The order of departure.

centre of the army (of the weaker part, in fact), and was to be at hand wherever the pressure of the battle might be greatest. The sick and the wounded were not forgotten: they were to be taken upon the cruppers of the horse-soldiers. Having made these dispositions, Cortes then brought out the gold. Seven wounded horses, one mare belonging to Cortes, and eighty Tlascalans, were laden with the King's fifths, or with what could be carried of them. After this had been done, Cortes bade the soldiers take what they liked of the rest of the gold; and woe to him who encumbered himself with any! for, we are told, it was their destruction (*literally*, their "knife"),* and that he who took least gold, came best out of danger on this disastrous night.

The retreat commenced: the first bridge.

A little before midnight the stealthy march began. The Spaniards succeeded in laying down the pontoon over the first bridge-way, and the vanguard with Sandoval passed over; Cortes and

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* "Que los que quisiesen, tomasen del Tesoro que havia, á su voluntad, que fué su cuchillo, porque el que menos tomó, salió mejor del caso."—Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. II. lib. x. cap. 11.

his men also passed over; but, while the rest were passing, the Mexicans gave the alarm with loud shouts and blowing of horns. "Tlaltelulco,* Tlaltelulco!" they exclaimed, "come out quickly with your canoes: the *teules* are going; cut them off at the bridges." Almost immediately after this alarm, the lake was covered with canoes. It rained, and the misfortunes of the night commenced by two horses slipping from the pontoon into the water. Then, the Mexicans attacked the pontoon-bearers so furiously, that it was impossible for them to raise it up again. In very short time the water at that part was full of dead horses, Tlascalan men, Indian women, baggage, artillery, prisoners, and boxes (*petacas*) which, I suppose, supported the pontoon. On every side the most piteous cries were heard, "Help me! I drown!" "Rescue me! they are killing me!" Such vain demands were mingled with prayers to the Virgin Mary and to Saint James. Those that did get upon the bridge and on the causeway, found bands of Mexican

The pontoon lost.

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* Tlaltelulco was the quarter of the town where the market was situated.

warriors ready to push them down again into the water.

The second bridge.

At the second bridge-way a single beam was found, which doubtless had been left for the convenience of the Mexicans themselves. This was useless for the horses; but Cortes diverging, found a shallow place where the water did not reach further than up to the saddle, and by that he and his horsemen passed (as Sandoval must have done before). He contrived, also, to get his foot-soldiers safely to the main-land, though whether they swam or waded, whether they kept the line of the causeway, or diverged into the shallows, it is difficult to determine. Leaving the vanguard and his own division safe on shore, Cortes with a small body of horse and foot, returned to give what assistance he could to those who were behind him. All order was now lost, and the retreat was little else than a confused slaughter, although small bodies of the Spaniards still retained sufficient presence of mind to act together, rushing forward, clearing the space about them, making their way at each moment with loss of life, but still some few survivors getting onwards. Few, indeed, of the rear-guard could

have escaped. It is told as a wonder of Alvarado, that, coming to the last bridge, he made a leap, which has by many been deemed impossible, and cleared the vast aperture. When Cortes came up to him, he was found accompanied only by seven soldiers, and eight Tlascalans, all covered with blood from their many wounds. They told Cortes that there was no use in going further back, that all who remained alive were there with them. Upon this the General turned; and the small and melancholy band of Spaniards pushed on to Tlacuba, Cortes protecting the rear. It is said that he sat down on a stone in a village called Popotla near Tlacuba, and wept; a rare occurrence, for he was not a man to waste any energy in weeping while aught remained to be done. The country was aroused against them, and they did not rest for the night till they had fortified themselves in a temple on a hill near Tlacuba, where afterwards was built a church dedicated, very appropriately, to Our Lady of Refuge (*á Nuestra Señora de los Remedios*).

The third bridge.

The remains of the army arrive at Tlacuba.

This memorable night has ever been celebrated in American history as *La noche triste*. In this flight from Mexico all the artillery was lost, and

Loss of men in the retreat of the *noche triste*.

there perished four hundred and fifty* Spaniards, amongst whom was Velazquez de Leon, one of the principal men in the expedition and a relation of the Governor of Cuba, four thousand of the Indian allies, forty-six horses, and most of the Mexican prisoners, including one son and two daughters of Montezuma, and his nephew the King of Tezcuco. A loss which posterity will ever regret was that of the books and accounts, memorials and writings, of which there were some, it is said, that contained a narrative of all that had happened since Cortes left Cuba.† The wisdom of the astrologer Botello did not save him (but what wise man is ever wise for himself!); and that any Spaniard remained alive seems to infer some negligence on the part of the Mexican conquerors.

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* Bernal Diaz estimates the number of Spaniards lost at eight hundred and seventy; Oviedo at eleven hundred and seventy. I have adopted in the text the numbers given by Gomara, but should not be surprised if they were proved to be understated.

† "Los Libros de la Cuenta, y Raçon de la Real Hacienda, y los Memoriales, y Escrituras pertenecientes á todo lo sucedido, desde que Cortés salió de Cuba."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. iv. cap. 71.

The error of the Spaniards, if error there were, was in taking only one pontoon.* The main error of the Mexicans was in not occupying the ground where the Spaniards would have to land, and in concentrating their forces at the bridges where there was not room for more than a certain number of them to act, and where they incommoded each other. The summary of the retreat I believe to be this: that the passage of the first bridge was successfully made, through means of the pontoon, by a large portion of the most serviceable persons in the little army, but that, even at that first point, there was great loss of life amongst the weaker portion, and of baggage, and artillery: that between the first bridge and the second there was almost a total destruction of the weaker, less mobile, and more laden part of the Spanish force: that, at the second bridge, by means of that beam which was fortunately there, a good number of those who would be called *sueltos*, active and skilful persons, and who were

Error of the Spaniards.

Of the Mexicans.

A summary of the retreat.

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* "Y si como llevaron una puente, fueran tres, pocos se perdieran."—HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. II. tom. ii. lib. x. cap. 11.

favoured by being in a forward position, contrived to pass; but that neither baggage, artillery, prisoners, nor men laden with bars of gold, ever passed that second fatal aperture: and, for the third, it seems to me that it could have been passed by those only who were able to swim, or who, having by chance diverged into a shallower part, waded through the water, and rejoined the causeway near the main-land. In the annals of retreats there has seldom been one recorded which proved more entirely disastrous. It occurred on the 1st of July, 1520.*

It took place, July, 1520.

Cortes proceeds to Tlascala.

From Tlacuba Cortes moved on towards the province of Tlascala, always fighting his way, and always encumbered with enemies. The night before he reached a certain valley, soon to be made celebrated by him, called the valley of Otumba, considering that every day the Spaniards were growing weaker and the enemy becoming bolder

* Bernal Diaz says that it occurred on the 10th of July: but this is contradicted by a date which Cortes gives in his letter, when, speaking of the day after the battle of Otumba, he says that it was a Sunday, the 8th of July. "Que fué Domingo á ocho de Julio."—Lorenzana, p. 149.

and more numerous, he bethought him of a device, or, as he expresses it, the Holy Spirit enlightened




him with advice,* in reference to the manner of

* "El Espíritu Santo me alumbró con este aviso."—LORENZANA, p. 148.

carrying the sick and wounded. They had hitherto been carried on horseback behind the fighting men, but he now caused litters to be constructed for them. This, at any moment of danger or difficulty, would give much more freedom of action to his cavalry. The next morning, the Spaniards had not proceeded two leagues before they found themselves surrounded by such a number of Indians that, as Cortes says, neither in front, nor in the rear, nor on the flanks, could any part of the plain be seen which was not covered by these Indians. Cortes and his men thought that this would be the last day of their lives. The battle raged for a long time, and was of that confused character, that fighting, or fleeing, or discerning whether they were victorious or defeated, was almost equally difficult for either party. It was one of those battles not admitting of large manœuvres, and of which each soldier engaged has afterwards a different story to tell. Conspicuous in the ranks of the enemy was their General, with his outspread flag, his rich armour of gold, and his plumes of silver feathers. Towards this glittering centre Cortes and his best captains, after the fight had lasted some time, directed their

Battle of Otumba.

attack; and Cortes himself bore down the Mexican General to the ground. The Mexicans, seeing their General slain, fled; and in this manner the celebrated battle of Otumba was gained by the Spaniards. The description which Cortes gives of the main incident in it is very characteristic of him, from the modesty and simplicity with which it is given. His own words are these: "And we went fighting in that toilsome manner a great part of the day, until it pleased God that there was slain a person amongst the enemy who must have been the General; for with his death the battle altogether ceased."

Death of the Indian General.

The modesty of Cortes.

After the victory the Spaniards proceeded with much less fear and less harassment, although, to use the graphic expression of Cortes, the enemy still continued biting them (*mordiéndonos*), until they reached a small country house where they encamped for the night. From that spot they could perceive certain sierras in the territory of Tlascala, a most welcome sight to their eyes, although Cortes, who knew mankind well, was thoroughly aware of the difference of reception that they might meet with now that they came, not as prosperous men and conquerors, but as

poor men and fugitives. The next day they entered the province of Tlascala, and rested in a Tlascalan town three days. There, the principal Tlascalan Lords came to see them, and, instead of showing any coldness or unkindness, they laboured to console Cortes in his misfortune.

Speech of the Tlascalan Lords to Cortes, consoling him.

"Oh! Malinché, Malinché," they said, "how it grieves us to hear of your misfortunes, and of those of all your brothers, and of the multitude of our own men who have perished with yours. Have we not told you many times, that you should not trust in those Mexican people, for there was no security from one day to another that they would not make war upon you, and you would not believe us? But now the thing is done, and nothing more remains at present but to refresh you and to cure you. Wherefore, we will go immediately to our city, where you shall be lodged as it may please you." With these words, and words like these, of noble kindness, their good allies brought the Spaniards to the chief city of Tlascala, which they reached about the middle of July, 1520.

The Spaniards kindly received at Tlascala.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Resolution of the Tlascalan Senate—Cortes in Tepeaca—Forms a Great Alliance against the Mexicans—Prepares to march against Mexico—Reviews his Troops at Tlascala.*

RETREATING, wounded, despoiled, having lost numbers of his own men, and the greater part of his allied troops, almost any other commander but Cortes would have been thoroughly cast down. Not so, this modern Cæsar, who only meditated to refresh himself by new combats. That section, however, of his men who had been the followers of Narvaez, and probably some of the others, did not share in the ardour of their chief. On the contrary, they counselled an instant march to Vera Cruz, fearing lest their present allies, uniting with their enemies, should occupy the passes between the town of

Tlascala and the sea. If Cortes had an intention of resuming the war with Mexico, their present repose, they thought, would but fatten them for sacrifice. Such was the common discourse, and such, indeed, were the representations which they made to Cortes himself. Moreover, when he did not give way to their suggestions, they drew up a formal requisition, in which they stated their loss of men, their want of horses, weapons, and ammunition, and upon these statements required him to march to Vera Cruz. The reply of Cortes to this requisition has been made for him by two considerable historians;* but as they did not write in concert, the speeches have not the slightest resemblance.† In one speech, he is made to allude to Xenophon, and to quote "Vegetius *De Re Militari;*" in the other (the chaplain's account), the deeds of Jonathan and David are brought in

Cortes is required to retreat to Vera Cruz.

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* Oviedo and Gomara.

† May that man who invented fictitious speech-making in history yet have to listen to innumerable speeches from dull men accustomed to address courts of law, or legislative assemblies! I wish him no further punishment, though he has been a most mischievous person to the human race.

by way of illustration. Cortes himself, who always speaks simply, tells the Emperor, that, recollecting how fortune favours the daring (*que siempre á los osados ayuda la fortuna*),—a proverb which he acted out so nobly, that of all men of his time he had most right to quote it; and also reflecting that any symptom of pusillanimity would bring down the Indians upon them, both friends and enemies, more quickly than anything else; and also considering, that he and his men were Christians, and that God "would not permit" that they should altogether perish, and that such a great country should be lost,—he determined on no account to descend towards the sea. Accordingly, he told his men that to quit the country would not only be shameful to him, and dangerous to all of them, but also treasonable to the King's service.

The view which Cortes took of his situation.

It is clear that Cortes was supported by a considerable section of his own men. Such is the statement of Bernal Diaz; and it is evident to me that this soldier-historian, for one, did not join with those who presented the aforesaid requisition, as, if he had accompanied the malcontents, instead of proving that there were certain gross

errors in the statements which Gomara puts into the mouth of Cortes, he would, I think, have asserted that the speech was altogether a fabrication. The truth is, that the men of Narvaez were of a richer class than the men of Cortes, and were much less compromised in his doings. Indeed, they taunted the others by saying that these had nothing but their persons to lose; while they maintained that the desire to command was that which induced Cortes himself to persevere.*

Mexico sends ambassadors to Tlascala.

Meanwhile, as great, if not a greater, danger threatened Cortes from another quarter. The Mexicans sent ambassadors to the government of Tlascala with a present of garments, feathers, and salt. These ambassadors, being admitted into the Tlascalan senate, referred to the identity of lineage, laws, and language between the Mexicans and the Tlascalans; spoke of their ancient enterprises in arms together, and of a friendship between the two nations which had been broken by a question

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* "Y mas dezian, que nuestro Cortés, por mandar, y siempre ser señor, y nosotros los que con el passavamos, no tener que perder, sino nuestras personas, assistiamos con él."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 129.

of religion ;* and then said, that it would be well that the present state of hostility should be put an end to, and that the Tlascalans should not be deprived of those productions which abounded in the Mexican Empire. This last argument was an allusion to the commerce in salt, of which the patriotic Tlascalans had long deprived themselves. The Mexican ambassadors added, that, in order that the two nations might come to terms, it would be necessary that these few Christians should be sacrificed, with whom their gods were very angry. Finally, the Mexicans concluded by saying (which was the most effective appeal they could make), that the Spaniards would insult the Tlascalans as they had insulted them.

Speech of the Mexican ambassadors.

The senate received the presents, and said that they would consider the matter. The ambassadors

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* "Qu'ensuite une question de religion avait altéré eur amitié, et qu'il en était résulté les discordes qui taient nées par la suite."—IXTLILXOCHITL, *Hist. des Chi-himèques*, cap. 90.

This record of a religious difference between the two ations deserves attention from the student of pre-Spanish American history, and might lead to some urious and important discovery.

having left the Audience Chamber, the debate began. The chief speakers were Maxitcatzin* and Xicotencatl the younger (*el mozo*); the former always friendly to the Spaniards, the latter their determined enemy. It was a great debate, in which much was to be said on both sides. Honour and faith were with Maxitcatzin, and perhaps even the balance of policy was in his favour; but much was to be said upon the other side; and, with all their courteous reticence, it must not be supposed that the Tlascalans had not felt very deeply the total loss of that part of their army which had accompanied the Spaniards to Mexico, and the disgrace of the flight. Some reproaches, even, had been addressed to the Spaniards upon this point; though, no doubt, these had been uttered only, or chiefly, by people of the lower classes. Xicotencatl main-

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* These uncouth Mexican names were, I have no doubt, much softer and more tolerable than they appear. In this name, the last syllable "tzin," is a title of honour; and that the name was pronounced much more softly than the appearance of it in writing might lead us to suppose, may be inferred from the corruption of the name which appears in Bernal Diaz, namely, "Masse Escaci."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 129.

tained that it would be better to enter into the Mexican confederacy, and to uphold their ancient customs, than to learn the new ones of this foreign people, an irrepressible race, who wished to have the command in everything. "Now was the time," he said, "to adopt this counsel, when the Spaniards were routed and dispirited."

Debate in the Tlascalan senate.

It is probable, as often happens in difficult dilemmas, that neither of the two opposite courses suggested would have sufficed to save the Tlascalans, for even if they had deserted Cortes now, the Mexicans would never have forgiven them for having in the first instance received and favoured the Spaniards. Still, however little chance of escape by wisdom there was for the Tlascalans, it is seldom that a more important council has been held; for certainly if the Tlascalan senate had gone with Xicotencatl the younger, the Spanish conquest must have been deferred, and might have taken place under very different auspices. The debate waxed warm; so warm, indeed, that Maxitcatzin struck his opponent, who was precipitated down a flight of stairs, the debate having been held in an oratory. A miraculous

turn has been given to the story, such as that a cloud was seen to enter the room and rest upon a cross which was there, and that the members of the council were influenced by this miraculous interposition.* We need not, however, depreciate the generous disposition of the Tlascalans by imagining any miraculous interference as needful to confirm it. They admired their allies, the Spaniards; they had fought side by side with them; they were willing to share their reverses, and to throw in their lot with that of these skilful and enduring strangers. In a word, the counsel of Maxitcatzin prevailed, and, though they knew it not, the fate of the Tlascalans was therein decided also. Henceforth their great city, with its numerous population, was to dwindle

The Tlascalans resolve to abide by their alliance with the Spaniards.

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* "Tous ceux qui étaient présents virent entrer une nuée qui couvrit la croix, et toute la salle resta dans l'obscurité. Ils (Maxizcatzin et Xicotencatl) en vinrent aux mains; Maxizcatzin lui donna un coup de poing si violent qu'il le renversa en bas de l'escalier qui est à l'entrée de la salle. Tous les membres de l'assemblée, témoins d'un si grand miracle, furent ébranlés et adoptèrent l'opinion de Maxizcatzin."—IXTLILXOCHITL, *Histoire des Chichimèques*, cap. 90.

away under the shade of their engrossing allies, until it should become, as it is to be seen in our time, a petty country town.*

It was, perhaps, from policy, perhaps from a grand politeness, which is to be noticed amongst these Indians, that Maxitcatzin did not mention to Cortes anything about this Mexican embassy. The intelligence, however, reached his ear, it is said, from other quarters; and, curiously enough, the rival chieftain Xicotencatl, seeing that it was useless to oppose Cortes, came and offered his

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* "The ancient numerous population of Tlascala is no longer found within its limits, and perhaps not more than four or five thousand individuals now inhabit it. But the town is, nevertheless, handsome;—its streets are regular; its private houses, town hall, bishop's palace, and principal church, are built in a style of tasteful architecture, while on the remains of the chief Teocalli (temple) of the ancient Tlascalans, a Franciscan convent has been built, which is perhaps one of the earliest ecclesiastical edifices in the Republic. In the town itself and in its vicinity many relics and ruins of the past glory of Tlascala are still found by antiquarians, but they have hitherto been undisturbed by foreign visitors, and remain unnoticed by the natives."—Brantz Mayer's *Mexico, Aztec, Spanish and Republican*, vol. ii. lib. v. cap. 4. Hartford, U.S. 1852.

Cortes resolves to invade Tepeaca.

services to him in an expedition which Cortes now proposed to make against Tepeaca, a country lying southward, the inhabitants of which were inimical to the Tlascalans, and also to Cortes, having intercepted and slain ten or twelve Spaniards who were coming from Vera Cruz to Mexico. These Tepeacans, moreover, were allies of the Mexicans.

The persuasive Cortes proved equally successful with his own men as with the Tlascalans. The men of Narvaez murmured, but they went; and Cortes, on quitting Tlascala, which he did at the end of twenty-two days after his return to that city, found himself at the head of a large army, amounting to no less than one hundred and fifty thousand men. Among these the Cholulans were to be found as allies.

The world is too old, and there is too little time now, for listening to a minute account of the fate of any province or nation which has not contrived to make itself known for anything but its disasters. We cannot, therefore, do more than say that Tepeaca was swiftly subdued, and that the people in that part of the country where the Spaniards had been intercepted, were made slaves,

Cortes alleging that they were cannibals, and also that he wished to terrify the Mexicans,— declaring at the same time a favourite doctrine of his, namely, that the people were so numerous, that unless a "great and cruel chastisement" were made amongst them, they would never be amended.* Cortes then founded a town in that district, which he called La Segura de la Frontera.

Cruel policy of Cortes.

La Segura de la Frontera founded.

For the reason above given, it will be needless to enter into all the wars and forays that Cortes undertook at this period. Suffice it to say, that wherever he met the Mexican troops, he routed them, conquering also their allies, and receiving the conquered provinces into the friendship and under the vassalage of the King of Spain. It is observable that the towns and fortresses were well built. Of a town, for instance, called Yzzucán,

Successes of Cortes in the provinces of New Spain.

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* "Porque demás de haber muerto á los dichos Españoles, y rebeladose contra el Servicio de Vuestra Alteza, comen todos carne humana, por cuya notoriedad no embio á Vuestra Magestad probanza de ello. Y tambien me movió á facer los dichos Esclavos, por poner algun espanto á los de Culúa: y porque tambien hay tanta Gente, que si no ficiesse grande, y cruel castigo en ellos, nunca se emendarían jamás."—LORENZANA, p. 154.

Cortes says, "It is very well arranged as regards its streets, and has a hundred temples."* Of Guacachula he says, "It is surrounded by a strong wall twenty feet high, with a battlement two feet and a half high." It had four entrances, so constructed, that the walls overlapped one another. Again, of the provinces of Zuzula and Tamazula, Cortes mentions, that they were thickly populated, and the houses better built than any that the Spaniards had seen elsewhere in the New World.† It is necessary to remark these things, as otherwise it might be supposed that Mexico, as it was the central point of the Conquest, was the only centre of civilization; whereas, a certain kind of well-being, and some knowledge of the arts of life, were spread over a considerable portion of America, and might be traced, indeed, from

Other fine towns in New Spain besides Mexico.

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* "Esta Ciudad de Yzzucán será de hasta tres, ó quatro mil Vecinos, es muy concertada en sus Calles, y Tratos, tenia cien Casas de Mezquitas, y Oratorios muy fuertes con sus Torres: las quales todas se quemaron." —LORENZANA, p. 164.

† "Habia muy grandes Poblaciones, y Casas muy bien obradas, de mejor Cantería, que en ninguna de estas Partes se había visto."—LORENZANA, p. 162.

a point further south than Cusco, in Peru (following the Andes, the spinal column of that great continent), to California.

The result of the exertions of Cortes at this period, namely, from July to December in the year 1520, was to form a great defensive and offensive alliance against the Mexicans, and to render an attack upon that country, not merely a splendid and chivalrous attempt, but an enterprise entirely consistent with the rules of that prudence, into which the valour of Cortes was welded as the blade of the sword is to its handle.

Great alliance against the Mexicans.

This enterprise Cortes had, probably, never abandoned for one single moment. To the Emperor he emphatically says, "My determined resolution was to return upon the men of that great city."* Accordingly, he had not devoted all his energies to gaining or subduing provinces more or less obscure, but had bethought him of what would certainly be requisite in any attack to be made upon Mexico. He had despatched, for

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* "Mi determinada voluntad era, rebolver sobre los de aquella gran Ciudad."—LORENZANA, p. 178.

instance, four ships (the same that had been sent out under the command of Narvaez to subdue him) to Hispaniola for horses—he justly puts those animals first—men, arms, and ammunition. Then, with still more forethought, he had given orders for brigantines to be constructed in separate pieces at Tlascala, and over this work he had placed a skilful artificer, named Martin Lopez. He had written to the Emperor, detailing the events which had befallen him, and the plans which he cherished; and, in a word, he had neglected nothing which would conduce to the success of his great undertaking.

Cortes orders brigantines to be constructed at Tlascala.

It remains to be seen, what, in the meanwhile, the Mexicans, who also were not the men to fold their arms while they were on the eve of battle, had done on their side to meet their vigorous and determined enemy. They, too, had sought to make new alliances and to strengthen old ones; and their diplomatic efforts had not been so unsuccessful in other places as they had proved in Tlascala. They had sought to secure their tributaries, not by harshness, but by the remission of one year's tribute, on condition that they should wage

The Mexicans not inactive.

unceasing war against the Spaniards. In their own vicinity, the Mexicans built walls, formed entrenchments, and dug fosses; and they fabricated a new kind of arms,—long lances, especially destined to repel the cavalry of their opponents.

It had not been permitted to the Mexicans to devote their time and energies to the future alone. Already, they had found much to contend against, for even when they had got rid of Cortes and his men, they had still two terrible enemies within their city, civil discord and contagious disease. We learn from Indian authorities,* that immediately after the Spaniards had fled from Mexico, a great contention arose between those Mexicans who had at all befriended the Spaniards, and the rest of the townsmen. In the combats which then took place, two of Montezuma's sons perished.†

Discord and pestilence in Mexico.

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* "Dícese en un Memorial, que dexó escrito el Indio, que se halló en la Conquista, (que despues de Christiano aprendió á Leer y Escrivir, el qual tengo en mi poder) que luego que los Españoles salieron de la Ciudad, huvo diferencias grandes entre los Mexicanos."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. iv. cap. 73.

† This is confirmed, incidentally, to a certain extent,

In the meanwhile, Cortes, having subdued the provinces adjacent to La Segura, was willing to allow some of the men of Narvaez to return to Cuba, on the ground, as he informed his own partisans, "that it was better to be alone than ill-accompanied."* Previously, however, to their departure, a division was made of that part of the spoil which consisted of slaves; and the proceedings in this matter deserve special attention. These slaves were first collected together, and then branded with the letter "G," which signified *guerra* (war). A fifth was taken for the King; then, another fifth for Cortes; and the rest were divided amongst the men. We naturally picture to our minds, when reading of slaves of war, that they were strong men, who having come out to fight, had been conquered by stronger or more valiant men, and that the penalty of defeat was

A division of slaves amongst the Spaniards.

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in the conversation which Montezuma's son-in-law, Johan Cano, had with Oviedo (see "Hist. de las Indias," lib. xxxiii. cap. liv. p. 549), though Cano throws the blame upon the new Monarch of having ordered the death of one of Montezuma's sons.

* "Que valia mas estar solos, que mal acompañados." —Bernal Diaz, cap. 136.

servitude,—a transaction which does not shock us much, especially in an age, comparatively speaking, barbarous. But, in this case, and, doubtless, in many others, we should have been much astonished if the slaves had been paraded before us, seeing that they consisted of boys, girls, and young women, for the Spanish soldiers would not make slaves of the men, because they were so troublesome to guard; and, besides, the Spaniards had already, in their Tlascalan friends, men who were ready to do any hard work for them.*

The age and sex of the slaves.

The Spanish soldiers were very much dissatisfied with the mode of division adopted by Cortes. They had brought together to the marking-house their private spoil of human beings; they had even begun to civilize their female captives by clothing them;† and now, after the King and

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* "Todos ocurrimos con todas las Indias muchachas, y muchachos que aviamos avido, que de hombre de edad no nos curavamos dellos, que eran malos de guardar, y no aviamos menester, su servicio, teniendo á nuestros amigos los Tlascaltecas.—Bernal Diaz, cap. 135."

† "Les avian dado enaguas, y camisas."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 135.

Cortes, and, probably, the other great officers, had taken their share of the spoil, there were no women left but those who were feeble and aged (*davan nos las viejas y ruinas*). The soldiers were very angry. "Were there two kings in the land?" they exclaimed. When these murmurings reached Cortes, he endeavoured to appease the men, addressing them mildly, and swearing by his conscience (a favourite oath of his), that, henceforth, the slaves should be sold by auction.

The Spanish soldiers murmur.

These important affairs having been settled, Cortes quitted La Segura in the middle of December, 1520, to return to Tlascala. On his road, he stopped at Cholula, where the people much desired his arrival, as many of their chiefs were dead, and they wished him to nominate others in their place, which he consented to do.

Cortes quits La Segura, Dec. 1520.

This transaction is notable, as it shows in what high esteem Cortes was held by the natives; but it is also far more notable, on account of the disease of which these chiefs had perished. A black man in the troop of Narvaez had fallen ill of the small-pox, and from him the infection rapidly spread throughout New Spain, and became an

The small pox in New Spain: its ravages.

important element in the subjugation of the country. It has been maintained, and with some likelihood, that this was the first introduction of that terrible disease into the Continent of America, and that the natives, being unaccustomed to deal with it, and resorting to bathing as a means of cure, perished in great numbers. There is also another theory which has been maintained in modern times, and which would account for the fatality of this disease amongst the Indians, whether it were newly introduced or not. This theory is, that the diseases of a strong people have a strength which cannot be fought against by a weaker people. Had the small-pox been bred amongst the Indians themselves, they would, it is contended, have been able to make a better resistance to it; but coming from the Spaniards through this negro (also of a stronger race than the Indians), the new recipients were not able to make head against it. However this may be (and such questions are very interesting for the physiologist), it is certain that the arrival of Narvaez and his men, affording at first a bright gleam of hope to the Mexicans, was deeply injurious to them in three ways: in the generation of this

A questio for physiologists.

The arrival of Narvaez: how it proved ruinous to the Mexicans.

fatal disease; in the addition made to the forces of Cortes; and in his compelled absence from Mexico, at a most critical period, when the hopes of the Mexicans and the cruel folly of Alvarado led to that outbreak which was the distinct and direct cause of the future disasters of that kingdom.

Cortes at Tlascala again.

From Cholula Cortes moved on to his friendly Tlascalans, amongst whom he was received with every demonstration of joy,—with triumphal arches, dances, songs, and waving of banners. But there was sad news for him in the death, by the prevalent disease, of his faithful friend and adherent, Maxitcatzin. Cortes put on mourning for this Chief; and, at the request of the State, appointed his son, a youth of twelve or thirteen years of age, to succeed him. He also made the boy a knight, and had him baptized, naming him "Don Juan Maxitcatzin."

Cortes appoints a successor to Maxitcatzin.

The day after Christmas Day (the 26th of December, 1520), Cortes reviewed his troops, and found that they consisted of forty horsemen and five hundred and fifty foot soldiers, eighty of whom were either cross-bowmen or musketeers. He had also eight or nine cannon, but very little gun-

powder. He formed his horsemen into four divisions, and his foot-soldiers into nine. He then addressed them saying, that they knew how they and he, to serve His Sacred Majesty, the Emperor, had made a settlement in that country, and how the inhabitants of it had acknowledged their vassalage to His Majesty, continuing to act for some time as such vassals, receiving good offices from the Spaniards, and returning such offices to them. How, without any cause (such are his words, and we may well wonder what had become of that conscience which he was wont to swear by, when he uttered them), the inhabitants of Mexico and of all the provinces subject to them, had not only rebelled against His Majesty, but had killed many friends and relations of the Spaniards there present, and had driven them out of the land. He then passed to the main point of his discourse,—namely, that the Spaniards should return upon their former steps and regain that which they had lost. He advanced the following reasons for the prosecution of the war with Mexico; first, that it was a war for the furtherance of the Faith, and against a barbarous nation; secondly, that it was for the service of His Majesty; thirdly, for

Speech of Cortes to his troops.

That they should reconquer Mexico.

the security of their own lives: and then he brought forward as a topic, not so much in the way of reason as of encouragement, the alliances which the Spaniards had secured in aid of this their great enterprise. He afterwards told them that he had made certain ordinances for the government of the army, which he begged them carefully to observe.*

His men assent.

He received a suitable reply from his men, who declared that they were ready to die for the Faith, and for the service of His Majesty; that they would recover what was lost, and take vengeance for the "treason" which the Mexicans and their allies had committed against them.

The ordinances were proclaimed by sound of trumpet, and the Spaniards returned to their quarters.

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* "Que ninguno blasfemase el Santo Nombre de Dios.

"Que no riñese un Español con otro.

"Que no jugase Armas, ni Caballo.

"Que no forçasen Mugeres.

"Que nadie tomase Ropa, ni captivase Indios, ni hiciese correrías, ni saquease sin licencia suia, í acuerdo del Cabildo.

"Que no injuriasen á los Indios de Guerra Amigos, ni diesen á los de carga."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 119. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2.

Review of the Tlascalan troops.

The next day the Tlascalans held their review, and, as these were the allies whom Cortes greatly relied upon, it will be well to give an account of the review, especially as it comes to us on the authority of an historian who had access to the papers of the Spanish officer intrusted with all the arrangements connected with these allies.

First of all came the military musicians: then the four Lords of the four quarters of the city, magnificently arrayed after their fashion. They were adorned with a rich mass of plumage* which rose from their shoulders a yard in height, and towered above their heads; precious stones hung from their ears and from their thick lips; their hair was bound by a band of gold or silver; on their feet there were splendid sandals.

Behind these chiefs came four pages bearing their bows and arrows.† They themselves carried

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* Those who are familiar with engravings representing the ruins of the ancient American temples will have no difficulty in recognizing this head-dress. It furnishes another proof that these temples were built by men of this race.

† "Saliéndoles de las Espaldas, una Vara en alto, sobre la Cabeça, mui ricos Plumages, encaxadas Piedras ricas, en los Agujeros de las Orejas, y beços, y el Cabel-

swords (*macanas*)* and shields. Then came four standard-bearers, carrying the standards of each seignory, which had their arms depicted upon them. Then came sixty thousand bowmen, passing in files of twenty, the standards emblazoned with the arms of the captain of each company appearing at intervals. As the standard-bearers approached the Spanish General, they lowered their standards; whereupon he rose and took off his fur cap. The whole company, then, in a graceful manner, bowed, and shot their arrows into the air. Then came forty thousand shield-bearers, but it is not mentioned what arms for offence they carried; and, lastly, ten thousand pikemen.

Cortes addressed the Tlascalan Chiefs in a very skilful speech, in the course of which he told them that he was going to take his departure

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lo tomado con una Vanda de Oro, ó Plata, en los Piés, ricas Cotaras, tras ellos quatro Pages, con sus Arcos, y Flechas."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. iv. cap. 81.

* These swords were made of wood, but probably had sharp facets made of flint or of obsidian, and might be made to inflict a very ugly wound.

the next day, to enter into the territory of their common enemy, the Mexicans; but that the city of Mexico could not be captured without the aid of those brigantines which were being built at Tlascala. He, therefore, begged his allies to furnish the Spaniards who were left to build these vessels with all the means of doing so, and to treat them well, as they always had done, in order that the vessels might be ready, when, if God should give him the victory, he should send from the city of Tezcuco for them. The Tlascalans replied with enthusiasm that they would die where he died, so that they might revenge themselves upon the men of Mexico, their principal enemies; that, with regard to the brigantines, they would not only do what he told them, but when the vessels were finished, they would convey them to Mexico; and that then the whole Tlascalan force would accompany him to the war.

Cortes confides his shipwrights to the good offices of the Tlascalans.

END OF VOL. I.




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# LIFE OF HERNANDO CORTES.

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# HERNANDO CORTES.

## CHAPTER X.

*The march to Tezcuco—Surprizes Iztapalapa—Expedition round the Great Lake—Final preparations for the siege of Mexico.*

HAVING so far prospered in all that he had planned against the devoted city of Mexico, Cortes started from Tlascala on the 28th of December, the Feast of the Innocents. There were three ways leading to Tezcuco; Cortes chose the most difficult one, thinking wisely that it would be the least protected. Ten thousand Tlascalans accompanied him. He met with very little opposition, and with none that needs recounting, on the way. When he approached the spot from which the whole province of Mexico could be seen, Cortes bade his men

Cortes starts from Tlascala for the siege of Mexico.

give thanks to God for having brought them so far in safety. The army regarded the scene with a mixture of pleasure and sorrow: pleasure, from the hope they had of future conquest; sorrow, from the losses which that view brought back to their minds; and they all promised one another not to quit the country, but to conquer or die. After they had expressed that determination, they went on as gaily as if they were going to a festival.* That night the Spaniards halted at Coatepeque, a city subject to Tezcuco, and three leagues distant from it. The Spaniards found the place deserted; and as Cortes knew that the province belonging to Tezcuco was very populous, so that, as he remarks, it could furnish more than one hundred and fifty thousand warriors, he was very watchful that night. Nothing, however, happened; and, the next day, being the last of De-

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* "Y aunque obimos mucho placer en las ver, considerando el daño pasado, que en ellas habiamos recibido, representósenos alguna tristeza por ello, y prometimos, todos de nunca de ella salir, sin Victoria, ó dejar allí las vidas. Y con esta determinacion ibamos todos tan alegres, como si fueramos á cosa de mucho placer."—Lorenzana, p. 188.

cember, they resumed their march in considerable perplexity as to what were the intentions of the Tezcucans. They had hardly left their quarters before they met four Indian Chiefs, one of whom Cortes recognised as an acquaintance, bearing a rod with a small flag of gold on it, a signal of peace, "which God knows," he adds, "how much we desired." The Chiefs, who came on the part of the King of Tezcuco, made excuses for the injuries which Cortes had received on a former occasion, and said that their King begged that Cortes would do no damage to their country, assuring him that they wished to be vassals to the King of Spain. After some further conference, they asked him whether he was going to the city that day, or whether he would take up his quarters in one or other of those towns which were suburbs* to Tezcuco. These suburbs extended for a league and a half, with houses all the way along.† Cortes replied that he meant to

Embassage to Cortes from the King of Tezcuco.

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* This shows the prosperity of the district, and is an important indication of the peace which it must have enjoyed.

† "Que son como Arrabales de la dicha Ciudad, las cuales se dicen Coatinchan, y Guaxuta, que están á una

reach Tezcuco that day, whereupon the Chiefs said that they would go forward and prepare the lodgings of the Spaniards. That evening, New Year's Eve, Cortes entered Tezcuco, and took up his quarters in the Palace of the King's late father, giving notice immediately, by a herald, that no Spaniard should quit the building without his leave. This he did to reassure the people, for he had noticed that not a tenth part of the usual population was visible, and that he could see no women or children, which was a bad sign. Some Spaniards having ascended the terraced tops of the building, which commanded the adjacent country, perceived that the inhabitants were flying from it, some betaking themselves with their goods to canoes upon the lake, and others hurrying off to the neighbouring sierras. Cortes immediately gave orders to stop their flight; but, as night now came quickly on, the pursuit was of no use. The King, whom Cortes says that he desired to have in his hands, "as he desired salvation," accompanied by many of the principal men,

Cortes enters Tezcuco.

The Tezcucans desert their city.

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legua y media de ella, y siempre va todo poblado."—LORENZANA, p. 190.

was among the fugitives who had gone to the city of Mexico. It was in the hope of detaining Cortes and preventing his entering the city as an enemy, that the messengers from Tezcuco had gone to meet him and parley with him in the morning. The chiefs of the neighbouring suburbs, or towns as they may more properly be called, did not follow the example of the King of the Tezcucans in his flight to Mexico, but after a few days returned and made peace with Cortes. The Mexicans, hearing this, sent an angry message to them, assuring them at the same time that, if they had made peace with Cortes in order to save their lands, they might enjoy other and better lands if they would come to Mexico. This message had no effect, and the chiefs delivered the messengers into the hands of Cortes, who availed himself of the opportunity to send an offer of peace by them to the authorities at Mexico. He assured them that he did not desire war, although he had much cause for offence; but that he wished to be their friend, as he had been of yore. He added, they well knew that those who had been chiefly concerned in the former war with him were dead (the small-pox had been busy at Mexico,

The neighbouring chiefs make peace with Cortes.

He sends a message of peace to Mexico.

and had carried off the King); "wherefore," he said, "let the past be past, and do not give me occasion to destroy your lands and cities, which I should much regret." This peaceful message led to no result, but the alliance with the neighbouring chiefs was cemented; and, when narrating the matter to the Emperor, Cortes adds, as if he were already a vice-roy, "in the name of Your Majesty, I pardoned them their past errors, and so they remained content."

Prepares to make an attack upon Iztapalapa.

The Spanish General stayed for seven or eight days at Tezcuco, being occupied in fortifying his quarters; and when he had done that, he sallied forth with a portion of his forces to make an attack upon the beautiful town of Iztapalapa. Iztapalapa was, comparatively speaking, a small place, of which about two thirds were situated in the water. Cortes had an especial grudge against this town, because it had belonged to the late King, that brother of Montezuma, who had been a principal agent in the events which led to the Spaniards being driven out of the city. He was the person who was sent out by Cortes to order the market to be

resumed, and who had thereupon been adopted as the leader of the insurgents.

Cortes did not enter the town without a vigorous resistance on the part of some troops who were posted at two leagues distance from it, but they were not able to withstand him. About two thirds of a league before entering the town, he found that a large sluice-gate had been broken up, the position of which was between the Salt Lake and the Fresh-water Lake. The Spaniards thought little of this circumstance, but pushed on with all the "covetousness of victory," routed the inhabitants who made a stand in their town, and killed more than six thousand of them, men, women, and children, in which sad slaughter the Indian allies took a prominent part. When night came on, Cortes recalled his men from their work of plunder and destruction, and then finished by setting fire to some houses. While these were burning, it appears, says Cortes, that "Our Lord inspired me with the thought, and brought to my memory this sluice-gate which I had seen broken in the morning."* The great danger he was in

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* This narrative only becomes intelligible on the sup-

struck him in a moment. He instantly gave orders for retreat. It was nine o'clock before he reached the spot of greatest inundation, which I think must have been between that hill which stood over the town and the short causeway connecting Iztapalapa with the main-land. Here Cortes found the water rushing in with great force. The Spaniards bounded across the dangerous pass (*pasamos á volapie*); but some of the Indian allies, not so agile or more encumbered, were drowned; and all the spoil was lost. If they had stopped for three hours more, or if the moon, always a favourer of the romantic Cortes, had not shone forth most opportunely on that night,* none of them would have escaped alive. When day dawned, the height of one lake was the same as the height of the other; and the Salt Lake was covered with canoes, containing Mexican soldiers, who had hoped to find the Spaniards cut off in their retreat, and surrounded

His great danger at that town.

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position that Cortes entered Iztapalapa on the south side (as he had done before on his first entry into Mexico), and not on the Tezcucan side.

* See Veytia, "Hist. Antigua de Méjico," tom. iii. Apendice, cap. 16. Mejico, 1836.

by water. Cortes withdrew his men in safety to Tezcuco, having escaped one of the many great dangers of his life. Had any other of the Spanish commanders been the leader of that expedition, it would probably have perished. If valour be the sword, a keen appreciation of danger (often possessed in the highest degree by those who bear themselves best when in danger) is the shield of a great general, or, indeed, of any one who has to guide and to command.

After the return of Cortes to Tezcuco, the people of Otumba, who had already felt the weight of the Spanish General's hand, sent to seek his alliance, and were received as faithful vassals of the King of Spain.

The next enterprise which Cortes undertook, was one of great importance, for its object was to secure a free communication between his present position at Tezcuco and his friendly town of Tlascala, and also his own colony at Vera Cruz. For this purpose he sent the Alguazil Mayor, Gonzalo de Sandoval, to the town and province of Chalco. A battle took place; Sandoval was victorious; and two sons of the Lord of Chalco came

Battle in the province of Chalco.

to Tezcuco to make friends with Cortes. These Princes had always been friendly to him, but had hitherto been under the control of the Mexicans. They required a safe-guard for returning, and were accordingly placed under the escort of Sandoval, who was ordered, after seeing them in safety, to go on to Tlascala, and to bring back with him some Spaniards who had been left there, and a certain younger brother of the King of Tezcuco. This Prince had been one of the prisoners of Cortes before the retreat from Mexico, and being young, was easily indoctrinated with the Spanish modes of thought, and had received in baptism the name of Fernando. When this youth was brought to Tezcuco by Sandoval, Cortes gave him the kingdom of his forefathers. This, as we shall hereafter see, was a most politic stroke, and it was of immediate service to the Spanish cause. The Tezcucans, finding a member of their own royal family placed upon the vacant throne, began to bethink themselves of returning to their homes. Political refugees seldom meet with the good reception they expect, and to which they think their sufferings and their sacrifices entitle them. However that may be,

Cortes appoints a king of Tezcuco.

from the time of Don Fernando's accession, the town began to be repeopled by its former inhabitants, and to look like itself again.

Since his arrival at Tezcuco, Cortes had been continuously successful in attracting to his banner new allies amongst the Indians. He was now to hear of good news from Spain. A youth of his household made his way across the country, knowing the delight his master would receive from the intelligence (in the words of Cortes, "that nothing in the world would give him greater pleasure"), to inform him that a ship had arrived at Vera Cruz, bringing, besides the mariners, thirty or forty Spaniards, eight horses, with some crossbows, muskets, and gunpowder. These seem but small reinforcements to make glad the heart of a man about to attempt the conquest of a great and populous country. Cortes, however, had men enough in his Indian allies to form the gross material of an army. But each Spaniard was as good as an officer; and the value of horses, guns, and powder, against an enemy who possessed none of these things, was incalculable.

The demands made upon Cortes in consequence of his Indian alliances were very great,

and at times very embarrassing. It was not to be expected that the advantage of such alliances could be all on one side; and on the very day that Cortes heard the news of the arrival of reinforcements from Spain, he received an embassage from the Chalcans, beseeching assistance against the Mexicans, who were coming upon them, they said, with great power. The remarks of Cortes upon this occasion are very notable, and furnish an explanation of much of his future conduct. In a letter to the King, he says, "I certify to Your Majesty, as I have done before, that, beyond our own labours and necessities, the greatest distress which I suffered, was in not being able to aid and succour our Indian allies, who, for being vassals of Your Majesty, were harassed and molested by the Mexicans."* The difficulty of difficulties in writing history, or reading it, is to appreciate the habitual current of ideas, the

The Chalcans ask for assistance from Cortes.

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* "Y certifico á Vuestra Majestad, que como en la otra Relacian escribí, allende de nuestro trabajo, y necesidad, la mayor fatiga, que tenia era, no poder ayudar, y socorrer á los Indios nuestros Amigos, que por ser Vasallos de Vuestra Majestad, eran molestados, y trabajados de los de Culúa."—LORENZANA, p. 204.

basis of thought, often so strangely opposed to our own, which belonged to the generation of which we read or write. It seems a mockery to us in the present age to talk of these Indian provinces as in a state of vassalage to the King of Spain; but evidently Cortes and the Spaniards of his time held very different notions on this subject. Cortes thought that the men who had once become vassals of the King of Spain, had not only duties to perform, which he was very rigorous in exacting, but also that they had distinct claims upon him, as the King's Lieutenant in those parts, an office into which he had inducted himself. On the present occasion, therefore, he was greatly perplexed by the demand of the Chalcans, for he could not spare his own men, being about to send a detachment of them under Sandoval to escort the Tlascalans who were to bring him the wrought materials of the brigantines.

His motive for granting it.

He resolved, however, to aid the Chalcans by claiming assistance for them from the neighbouring provinces, which were in his alliance. Accordingly, he was about to furnish them with a letter which, though they could not read nor

comprehend it, was always taken as a sort of voucher, when it fortunately happened that before the Chalcan embassage departed, there arrived, from the provinces friendly to Cortes, messengers, who had been sent to see whether he required any aid, for his allies had observed many smokes, and were afraid that Cortes was in need of their assistance. Cortes thanked the messengers warmly, told them that, thanks be to God, the Spaniards had always had the victory, and that glad as he was at the good will their province had shown, he was still more glad at having an opportunity of making them confederates with the Chalcans, which he succeeded in doing; and afterwards they assisted one another.

In three days after this business was settled, Cortes despatched Sandoval for the materials of the brigantines. When the Alguazil Mayor approached the territory of Tlascala, he found that the expedition had already set out. The men appointed to carry the materials were eight thousand. There was another body of two thousand, to furnish a relief for the bearers, and to carry provisions; and the escort consisted of a body of twenty thousand armed men. A noted warrior

of Tlascala, called Chichimecatl, led the van with ten thousand, and the other ten thousand brought up the rear under the command of two other Tlascalan Chiefs. On entering an enemy's country different arrangements had to be made. Chichimecatl had had the wood-work (*la tablazon*) of the brigantines under his charge, and the other captains the rigging and cordage (*la ligazon*). It was now thought advisable to throw the heavier part of the burden in the rear; but it was with the greatest difficulty that they could persuade the brave Chieftain to accept that position. At last, however, the march was thus arranged. In front came eight horsemen and a hundred Spanish foot; then ten thousand Tlascalans, forming an advance-guard, and also with wings thrown out to the right and the left; then came the bearers of the rigging and cordage; after them the bearers of the heavier burdens; and the whole line of march was closed by eight more Spanish horsemen, a hundred Spanish foot, and Chichimecatl with his force of ten thousand men. It would have been worth while for the Mexicans to have made almost any efforts and any sacrifice to have cut off or embarrassed this formidable reinforcement; but

The order of the march for carrying the materials of the brigantines.

they did not do so, and in three days' time it approached Tezcuco. Cortes went out to meet it; the Indians put on their plumes of feathers and their handsome dresses; and the procession joyfully entered Tezcuco to the sound of musical instruments. From the van-guard to the rear-guard it occupied two leagues in length, and was six hours in entering the town, without the ranks being broken.

The escort enters Tezcuco.

The Tlascalans expressed their longing to be led against the Mexicans, and their readiness to die in company with the Spaniards. Cortes thanked them, and told them that for the present they must rest themselves, but that very soon he would give them an abundance of work to do.

Cortes goes out to reconnoitre.

While his ships were being put together, Cortes went out to reconnoitre, taking with him a considerable force of his own men and thirty thousand of his allies. As he did not yet quite trust the Tezcucans, he did not let them know of his purpose or even of the direction of his march. His object, however, was to have some personal communication with the Mexicans. He, therefore, went round the north part of the Salt Lake,

and after the usual encounters, succeeded in occupying Tlacuba, a town which was in close proximity to Mexico. Very "pretty" combats took place every day between the Tlascalans and the Mexicans, and much vituperation was interchanged. Frequently the Spaniards and their allies made an entrance along the causeway into the suburbs of Mexico. Then, discourses such as Homer in more dignified language would have commemorated, passed between the combatants. "Come in, come in, and rest yourselves," exclaimed the indignant Mexicans; or they would say, "Perhaps you think there is now another Montezuma, so that you may do just what pleases you?" But one memorable conversation they held with Cortes himself, he being on one side of an aperture in the causeway where the bridge had been taken up, and they being on the other. The Spanish General made a sign to his men that they should be quiet, and the Mexican Chiefs on their side caused silence to be maintained amongst their people. Cortes began by asking whether they were madmen, and if it was their wish to be destroyed. He then demanded to know if any principal Lord was pre-

Singular interview between Cortes and the Mexicans.

sent amongst them, and, if so, requested he would approach, that they might have a conference. The Mexicans replied, that all that multitude of warriors whom he saw there were Lords; wherefore that he should say whatever he wanted to say. But Cortes, probably seeing from the temper and bearing of the Mexicans that nothing was to be done in this conference, remained silent, upon which they began to mock him, when some one on the Spanish side shouted out "that the Mexicans were dying of hunger, and that we should not permit them to go out and seek food." They replied, that they were in no want of it, and that if they should be, they would eat the Spaniards and the Tlascalans. Then one of them took some maize cakes, and threw them at the Spaniards, saying, "Take and eat, if you are hungry, for we are not so in the least;" and then they began immediately to shout and to fight. Cortes, seeing that there was no likelihood of obtaining a favourable reply to his overtures, and wishing to hasten the completion of the brigantines, returned to Tezcuco, after remaining six days in Tlacuba.

Cortes returns to Tezcuco.

After his return to Tezcuco, Cortes received

another message from the Chalcans, imploring assistance, and he again sent Sandoval to them, who was completely victorious over the Mexicans in the open field.

Arrival of reinforcements and of a Royal Treasurer.

The heart of Cortes was now gladdened by the news of fresh reinforcements from Spain, which came in three vessels. It was, probably, in one of these vessels that the King's Treasurer, Juan de Alderete, arrived. There came also at this time a certain friar, named Pedro de Aria, who brought indulgences from the Pope, so that if the soldiers were "somewhat indebted" (and the ways of war are not particularly sinless) they might compound for their transgressions; and we shall not be astonished to hear that the friar soon became rich.*

Another branding of slaves.

Sandoval having returned with many slaves, there was again a day of branding; but the same kind of injustice that the common soldiers had complained of was repeated, so that in future they did not bring their Indian female slaves

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* "Traxo unas Bulas de señor S. Pedro, y con ellas nos componian, si algo eramos en cargo en las guerras en que andavamos: por manera que en pocos meses el fraile fué rico y compuesto á Castilla."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 143.

to be branded, but pretended that they were *naborias* (that is, domestic servants), and that they had come peaceably from the neighbouring townships.*

The Chalcans were again harassed by their enemies, and again they summoned Cortes to their aid, sending him a large picture, on a white cloth, of the armies that were coming against them, and of the roads that they were taking. How it is to be wished that the Spaniards had adopted the same mode of description, and that we possessed now any single drawing of a Mexican building that we could thoroughly rely upon!

Cortes, partly with a view to succour these Chalcans, who were a continual care to him, and partly to make a thorough survey of the borders of the Lake, now undertook an expedition southwards. It was full of adventure and of risk for him; but, as it had no bearing on the main events of the war, I shall not give it in detail. It was

* "Deziamos que eran Naborias, que avian venido de paz de los pueblos comarcanos, y de Tlascala,"—Bernal Diaz, cap. 143.

in the course of this expedition, after he had been in great peril of his life, and had lost two of his grooms, who were carried off to be sacrificed, that he was standing at Tlacuba, looking at the great temple in Mexico (which was clearly visible from there), and thinking, it is supposed, of all that he had suffered in the *noche triste*, when he was heard to sigh deeply. It was this expression of sorrow which gave rise to a romance, well known at the time, beginning with the following words:—

The sadness of Cortes.

"En Tlacuba está Cortés,
Con su esquadron esforçado,
Triste estava y mui penoso,
Triste y con gran cuidado:
La una mano en la mexilla,
Y la otra en el costado." &c.*

Bernal Diaz, who must have been present, remembers that the Bachiller, Alonso Perez, endeavoured to comfort Cortes. "Señor Captain," he said, "let not your Honour be so sad, for in

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* In Tlacuba stands Cortes, with his valiant troops around him: sad he stood and full of pain; sad and oppressed with care; one hand to his cheek, and the other at his side.

war these things are wont to occur, and, at least, it will not be said of you,

"Mira Nero de Tarpeya
Á Roma como se ardia;"*

and Cortes answered that Alonso Perez knew how often he had sent to Mexico, in order to persuade its citizens to make peace; and that the sadness which he felt was not for one thing alone, but in thinking of all that would have to be encountered before the Spaniards should obtain the mastery. It will astonish those who have been

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* "Mira Nero de Tarpeya
A Roma como se ardia;
Gritos dan niños y viejos,
Y él de nada se dolia.
Que alegre vista!"

"Nero, from the Tarpeian rock, beholds
Rome, how it was burning:
Young men and old men are shrieking,
And he grieves for nothing.
What a cheerful sight!"

"Parece que este romance sobre el incendio de Roma gozó de gran valimiento entre el público, pues está contenido en muchas colecciones, si bien muy diferente en unas de como va en otras."—DEPPING, *Romancero Castellano*, Num. 46.

accustomed to consider Cortes as little else than a compound of craft and cruelty, to see him display such tenderness on this occasion. They will recall the massacre at Cholula, and the ferocious condemnation of Qualpopoca and of those other Mexican officers who had merely executed the commands of their sovereign. But it is highly probable that this tenderness of Cortes was an essential part of his character; and, in truth, it does not need much knowledge of mankind to discern how little a man's actions may tell of himself, and how the most striking deeds of his life may but conceal the deepest parts of his character.

Cortes was quite justified in making the statement, that he had sought to persuade the Mexicans to make peace; for, previously to this expedition, he had sent three Mexican chiefs, who had been captured in the war against the Chalcans, with a letter containing proposals for peace, the tenour of which he had carefully explained to them by interpreters. Nor was this the only occasion, for he had lost no opportunity of sending back any Mexican who fell into his hands, instructing him to admonish his fellow-

citizens, and urge them to submit themselves to the Spaniards.*

Villafaña's conspiracy.

Cortes having concluded this expedition round the Lake, during which he underwent great peril, returned to a still greater peril of a domestic nature. A man of the name of Villafaña, a great friend of the Governor of Cuba, acting in concert with some other soldiers of the party of Narvaez, formed a conspiracy to murder Cortes. The plan was as follows. They had heard that a vessel had just come from Spain, so that letters and despatches might be immediately expected. They intended, therefore, to enter the apartment of Cortes when he was seated at table, eating in company with his captains and soldiers;† they would then offer him a letter, saying that it came from his father, Martin Cortes, and while he was reading it, they would stab him and the rest of the company. They had arranged who was to suc-

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* "Donde quiera que podia haber alguno de la Ciudad, gelo tornaba á embiar para les amonestar, y requerir, que se diessen de Paz."—Lorenzana, p. 216.

† "Quando Cortés estuviesse sentado á la mesa comiendo con sus Capitanes é soldados."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 146.

ceed him in the command, and many persons were implicated in the conspiracy. But all conspiracies are subject to this dilemma;—either the secret is entrusted to very few, in which case the conspirators are weak and unprepared for the emergency when it comes—or rather for the transactions after the emergency—or it is entrusted to many, and unless acted upon instantly, can hardly be kept a secret. In this case too many had been consulted, and a common soldier betrayed the secret. Cortes summoned his own adherents, with the alcaldes and alguazils, entered Villafaña's apartments, and made him prisoner. Cortes then took from him a memorial which contained the signatures of the conspirators, but afterwards gave out that Villafaña had eaten this paper, and that he, Cortes, had never seen it. Villafaña was executed, and several other persons were imprisoned, but no one besides Villafaña suffered capitally. This plot gave an opportunity to Cortes to institute without offence a guard for his own person, which was afterwards of signal service to him during the siege of Mexico. Thus this danger turned out, as many had done before, a source of safety to Cortes: indeed, so a wise man

The conspiracy is defeated.

Cortes establishes a body-guard.

as he was can generally make considerable profit out of his past dangers and sufferings.

Everything was now ready for the great enterprise of the siege of Mexico—the turning point of the fortunes of Cortes. His brigantines had been put together. The canal was finished, along which they were to be launched from Tezcuco into the Lake. He had exhausted his efforts to bring the Mexicans to terms. He had made, in person, a thorough survey of the adjacent country; and he was rich in alliances with many of the neighbouring states. He now summoned his Indian allies to his aid. They were desired to come from Cholula, Tlascala, Chalco, Huaxocingo, and other towns, and to join his forces at Tezcuco within ten days. Though Tezcuco was a large town it could not contain the Indian allies. The Tlascalans came in good equipment and with admirable spirit, eager for the fray.* Bernal Diaz

Cortes summons his Indian allies.

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* "Entraron en Tetzcuco dos Dias antes de la Fiesta de Espíritu Santo, y toda la Gente tardó tres Dias en entrar, segun en sus Memoriales dice Alonso de Ojeda, ni con ser Tetzcuco tan gran Ciudad, cabian en ella; venian galanes, bien armados, deseosos de pelear, como lo

well compares the clouds of Indians who followed in their march to the birds of rapine which were wont to follow an army in Italy; and the comparison was not merely a poetical or fanciful one, as the food both of the foul birds and of the Indians was occasionally human flesh.* His Indian allies, however, were not merely useful to Cortes, but absolutely requisite; and it would have been ludicrous to have attempted the siege of Mexico without them. Cortes went out to meet his especial friends, the Tlascalans, and addressed the Spaniards in their presence somewhat in the following manner:—

Speech of Cortes to his men in the presence of the Tlascalans.

Enlarging upon the quality of the enterprise, and the honour which would be gained in sub-

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nostraron bien."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. v. cap. 89.

* "Iba tanta multitud de ellos á causa de los despojos que avian de aver: y lo mas cierto, por hartarse de carne humana, si huviesse batallas, porque bien sabian, que las avia de ver, y son á manera de dezir, como quando en Italia salia un exército de una parte á otra, y les seguian cuervos, y milanos, y otras aves de rapiña, que se mantenian de los cuerpos muertos que quedavan en el campo quando se dava alguna mui sangrienta batalla: assí he juzgado, que nos seguian tantos millares de Indios."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 144.

duing the finest and largest city in the world (*la mejor y mayor ciudad del mundo*), he said, that, putting aside the service of God, which was the most important thing, great glory was to be gained; and also vengeance for the affront they had received; moreover such a conquest for their King as mortal men had never before accomplished on behalf of any monarch. He reminded them that they were Castillians, a warlike and most brave nation; that, including their allies, they had an army such as the Romans had never collected together; that they had vessels to destroy their enemies' canoes, and to enter into the streets of the city of Mexico, and also that they were well provided with supplies. He said that with their brigantines they were masters upon the water; with their horses, upon the open plain: while their position upon the terra-firma enabled them to retire, if it should be necessary. He concluded by telling them that no great thing was ever done but at great sacrifice (*que nunca mucho costó poco*); and then he spoke to them of all the rewards of victory, not, as he said, to give them courage, for he well knew that they had no need of that, but only to remind them who they

were, and what was their enterprise, that they might enter upon it with joy and contentment, since, as honourable men, this war had been undertaken by them for the sake of God and of themselves.

The principal captains replied that the whole army understood that it was an agreement amongst them not to abandon the siege until they conquered or died, and that they came to this resolve with greater willingness, having him for their General with whom they were well contented, as they were ready to prove by their deeds.

The soldiers respond to the exhortation of Cortes.

# CHAPTER XI.

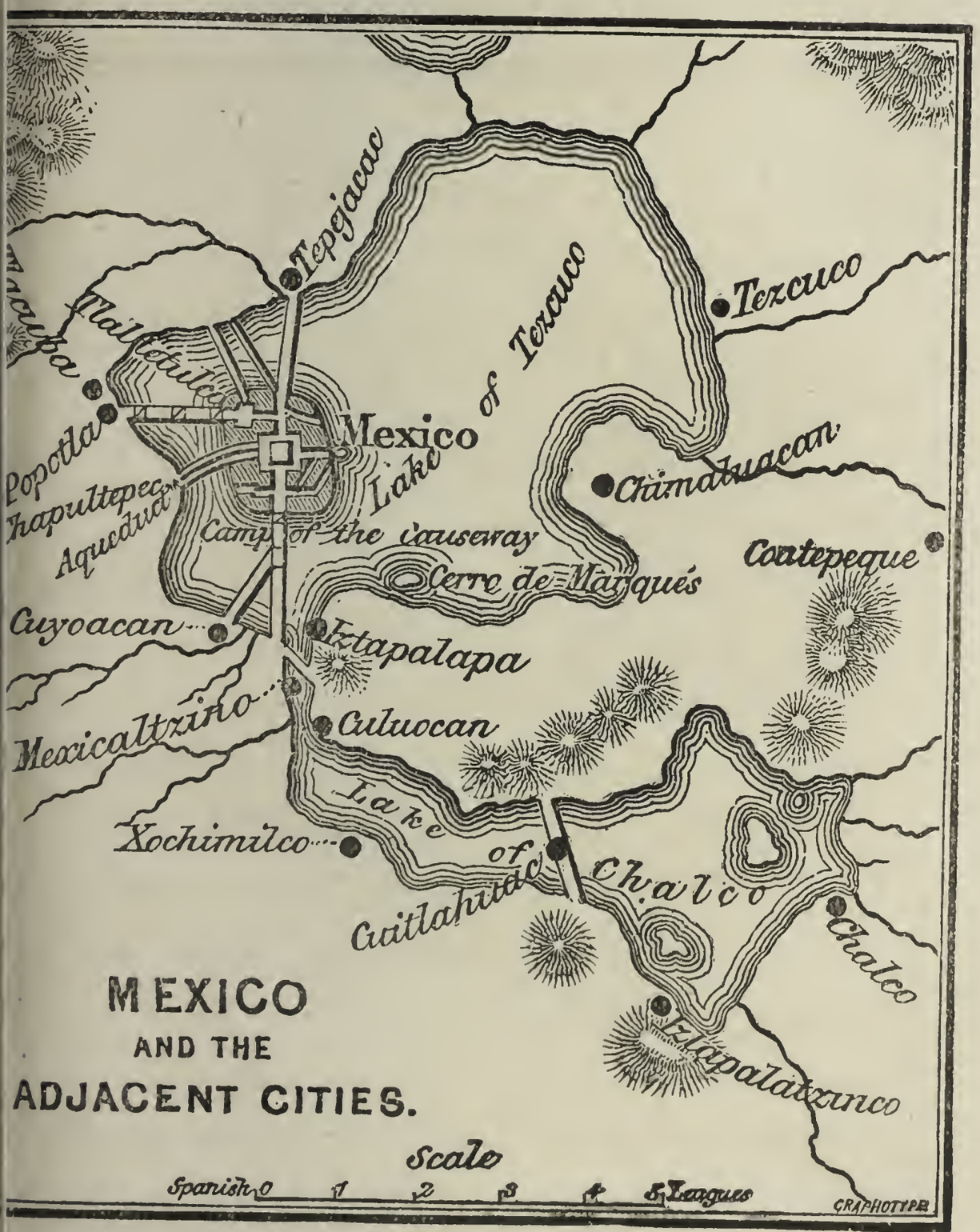
*The Spaniards and their allies commence the siege—Defeat of the Mexicans on the Lake—Mexico entirely invested—Council summoned by the Mexican king—Result of the first general attack—The various successes of Alvarado's division—Impatience of the soldiers—The second general attack—The Spaniards defeated.*

CORTES formed his troops into three divisions, placing one under the command of Pedro de Alvarado, another under Cristoval de Olid, and the third under Gonzalo de Sandoval, the Alguazil Mayor.

Alvarado's division.

Pedro de Alvarado had thirty horsemen, eighteen cross-bowmen or musketeers, and one hundred and fifty men with sword and buckler. Twenty thousand Tlascalan warriors accompanied this division, under the command of Xicotencatl

*el mozo.* Alvarado's division* was to take up its quarters at Tlacuba.




The second division, commanded by Cristoval

* Bernal Diaz, the historian, was in this division.

Olid's division.

de Olid, the Maestre de Campo, consisted of thirty-three horsemen, eighteen cross-bowmen or musketeers, and a hundred and sixty swordsmen. A body of more than twenty thousand Indian allies accompanied this force, which was to take up its position in Cuyoacan.

Sandoval's division.

Sandoval, the Alguazil Mayor, had under his command twenty-four horsemen, four musketeers, thirteen cross-bowmen, and a hundred and fifty swordsmen, fifty of them being picked young men; a sort of body-guard, as I conceive, to Cortes.* The Indian allies who accompanied this division, amounted to more than thirty thousand, being all those who came from Huaxocingo, Cholula, and Chalco. This division was to march to Iztapalapa, destroy it, pass on by a causeway under cover of the brigantines, and unite with Olid's division at Cuyoacan, in the neighbourhood of which the Alguazil Mayor was to choose a spot for his camp.

There were left, to man the brigantines, more than three hundred men, most of them good sea-

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* "Mancebos escogidos, que yo trahía en mi Compañía."—LORENZANA, p. 236.

men—each brigantine having twenty-five men, with six cross-bowmen or musketeers. Contrary to the advice of the principal personages* in his army, but very wisely, Cortes had determined to lead this division himself, for, as he afterwards remarked, the key† of the whole war was in the ships.

The brigantines commanded by Cortes in person.

Previously, however, to the first division of the army leaving for Tezcuco, an incident occurred which might have been fraught with the most serious consequences. To regulate the behaviour of his men towards each other is always one of the greatest difficulties for the general of an allied army, and one that requires the nicest

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* "Aunque yo deseaba mucho irme por la Tierra, por ar órden en los Reales, como los Capitanes eran Peronas de quien se podia muy bien fiar lo que tenian entre anos, y lo de los Bergantines importaba mucha importancia, y se requeria gran concierto, y cuidado, determiné de me meter en ellos, porque la mas aventura, y esgo era el que se esperaba por el Agua, aunque por las ersonas Principales de mi Compañía me fué requerido formar, que me fuesse con las Guarniciones, porque os pensaban, que ellas llevaban lo mas peligroso."—ORENZANA, p. 240.

† "La llave de toda la Guerra estaba en ellos."—RENZANA, p. 242.

management. Cortes did all that he could, by good rules, stringently maintained, to make his Spaniards behave well to his Indians. It happened, however, that a Spaniard inflicted some personal injury upon a cousin of Xicotencatl, the younger, the Tlascalan Prince who had formerly commanded the armies of that republic against Cortes. Whether in consequence of this new disgust, or from his old grudge, or, as some say, from the wish to see a Tlascalan lady,* Xicotencatl resolved to throw up his command, and to quit the camp. It is not improbable that his conduct was influenced by motives which might be termed treasonable, or patriotic, according to the point of view from which they are regarded; and he may have thought it a good opportunity for raising the standard of revolt against the Spaniards.

It was arranged that the Tlascalans attached to Alvarado's division should set off a day before the Spaniards, in order not to embarrass them in the march. As the Tlascalans were proceeding carelessly along, Chichimecatl, the brave warrio

* See Torquemada, lib. iv. cap. 90.

who had brought the brigantines from Tlascala, and had been so displeased at not being allowed to lead the van-guard, observed that their General, Xicotencatl, was not with them. He returned immediately, and informed Cortes. The Spanish General lost no time in despatching messengers who were to adjure the fugitive Tlascalan Chief to resume his command, begging him to consider that his father, Don Lorenzo (the old Tlascalan Chief had been baptized), if he had not been old and blind, would himself have led his countrymen against Mexico. To this Xicotencatl replied, that, if his father and Magisca had listened to him, they would not have been so much lorded over by the Spaniards, who made them do whatever they wished; and he gave for his final answer, that he would not return. Cortes, being informed of this reply, immediately ordered an alguazil, with four horsemen and five Indian chiefs, to go in pursuit of Xicotencatl, and, wherever they should come up with him, to hang him. This sentence was carried into effect, notwithstanding that Pedro de Alvarado interceded warmly in behalf of the Tlascalan Prince. It will show the reverence which the Indians enter-

The Tlascalan General deserts his army.

Xicotencatl put to death.

tained for their princes, that many of them came to seek a scrap of his clothes; * and it is another instance of the stern audacity of Cortes, that he should have ventured to put such a potent chief to death at so critical a period. But, as will hereafter be seen, it was very fortunate that he did so. The three things in a man's character which are best rewarded in this world are boldness, hardness, and circumspection. Cortes possessed the first and last qualifications in the highest degree; and, if he were not by nature a hard man, had the power of summoning up hardness whenever it was requisite to do so.

Alvarado and Olid quit Tezcuco, May, 1521.

On the 10th of May,† 1521, Alvarado and Olid quitted Tezcuco in company, and proceeded to occupy the positions assigned to them. The very first night after their departure these Com-

* "En muriendo, llegaron muchos Indios á tomar la Manta, y el Mastil, que es una Faxa ancha, que servia de Bragas, como Almaíçal; y el que llevaba un pedaço, creia, que llevaba una gran Reliquia. Atemoriçó mucho esta muerte á todos, por ser este Indio Persona mui Principal, y señalada."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. iv. cap. 90.

† Bernal Diaz says it was on the 13th of May.

manders had a quarrel about the encampment of their men, which Cortes learned directly, and interposing with all speed, sent an officer that night with instructions to reprimand these Generals, and afterwards to make them friends again. On their way to Tlacuba they found the intervening towns deserted, and, when they came to Tlacuba itself, that city also was without inhabitants. The army occupied the palace of the King, and, though it was the hour of Vespers when they entered, the Tlascalans, with the hatred of neighbours, made a reconnaissance along two of the causeways which led to Mexico, and fought for two or three hours with the Mexicans.

The great aqueduct destroyed.

The ensuing morning Alvarado and Olid commenced the work of destruction by cutting off, according to the commands of Cortes, the great aqueduct which supplied the city. It is melancholy to observe that such works as these, which are among the greatest triumphs of civilization, should be the first objects of attack in war, but it was good service, and thoroughly executed, although not without considerable opposition from the Mexicans, both by land and water.

On the succeeding day, Olid, with the whole of

Olid moves to Cuyoacan.

his division, moved on to Cuyoacan, described as being two leagues from Tlacuba.* They found this city also deserted,† and they occupied the regal palace there.

Cortes sends Sandoval to Iztapalapa.

It was now time for Cortes himself to quit Tezcuco, and commence operations in concert with the Alguazil Mayor. At four in the morning, on the day after the Festival of Corpus Christi, Cortes despatched Sandoval with the whole of his division, to Iztapalapa. That city was about seven short leagues distant. They

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* I give the distances generally from the words of the first conquerors. These distances, however, will not always correspond with the actual distances as ascertained by modern investigation, and sometimes, indeed, differ from them widely, as in the above instance. I conjecture that the word league, as used by Cortes or Bernal Diaz, represented a very variable quantity, and depended much upon the nature of the ground traversed, namely, whether it were champaign, hilly, or wooded.

† In the estimate which we shall afterwards have to make of the numbers which perished in the siege of Mexico, it must be recollected that immense additions to the population of the place were made by the abandonment of these flourishing towns on the borders of the lake.

arrived there a little after mid-day, and began to set fire to the houses, and to attack the inhabitants. These were a maritime race (the town was half built upon the lake), and, not being able to withstand the immense * force which Sandoval brought against them, took to the water in their canoes, whereupon the Alguazil Mayor occupied the town without further molestation.

Cortes sets sail from Tezcuco.

Cortes, who was the last of the generals to quit Tezcuco, set sail with the brigantines immediately after he had despatched Sandoval to Iztapalapa, and using both oars and sails, came within sight of the town at the time that Sandoval was entering it. Cortes had intended to have attacked that part of the town which lay in the water, but seeing probably that Sandoval would be able to accomplish the work without him, and observing that a large hill which rose out of the water (now called the *Cerro de Marqués*) was covered with the enemy, he commenced his attack upon their position on that eminence. It was

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* It appears to have been increased since the original division of the forces, for it is now spoken of as thirty-five thousand or forty thousand men.

The first success of Cortes.

very lofty and very abrupt, and the heights were fortified by walls of dry stone; but the Spaniards succeeded in forcing the entrenchments, and put all the defenders to the sword, except the women and children. Five-and-twenty Spaniards were wounded, but, as Cortes says, "it was a very pretty victory."*

The citizens of Iztapalapa had made smoke-signals (*ahumadas*) from the tops of some temples which were situated upon a very lofty hill, close to the town. From these signals, the Mexicans and the inhabitants of the other towns upon the borders of the lake, learnt the position of the Spanish vessels, and forthwith sent out a great flotilla of five hundred canoes, which bore down straight upon the brigantines. Cortes and his men instantly quitted their position on the hill, and embarked in their vessels. The orders to the captains were, on no account to move until Cortes should give the command. His object was to avoid any partial or disjointed action, and, if he struck at all, to strike a great blow,† such

500 Mexican canoes come out to attack the Spaniards.

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* "Pero fué muy hermosa Victoria."—LORENZANA, p. 241.

† "Como yo deseaba mucho, que el primer reencuen-

as should at once ensure his naval ascendancy. Silently, therefore, and as if entranced, the brigantines rested upon the water; while the vast multitude of canoes came rushing on, the Mexicans exhausting their strength in their haste to encompass the brigantines. When they had come within two bow-shots of the Spaniards, they rested upon their oars, and gazed upon the new form of their enemy. Still, the Spaniards did not move, and the hostile armaments remained in this position until, as Cortes says, "it pleased Our Lord" that a favourable breeze should arise from the land, upon which, the Spanish Commander immediately gave orders to commence the attack. The weighty brigantines bore down upon the light craft of the enemy with a fatal impetus, crushing them together wherever they came in contact with them. It soon became a total defeat. Numbers of the canoes were sunk, and the Mexican sailors in them destroyed. It must have been a flight almost as soon as it was an encounter; and the brigantines pursued the

The Mexicans are defeated on the lake.

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ro, que con ellos obiessemos, fuesse de mucha victoria." —LORENZANA, p. 241.

canoes for three long leagues, until they took refuge in the water streets of Mexico. Indeed, that any remained to escape was only owing to the multitude there were to destroy. Thus ended the hopes of the Mexicans of gaining, by their numbers, any advantage on the water; and the maxim of the great modern warrior * was again signally exemplified,—namely, that the art of war is the art of being strongest at the immediate point of encounter. If the Mexicans could literally have covered the lake of Tezcuco with canoes, the force and weight of a brigantine, whenever it came in contact with these small vessels, gave it instantly such a decided superiority, as to leave no scope for action on the other side.

Successful movement of Olid's division.

Meanwhile, the division under Olid at Cuyoacan could see and rejoice in the victory of their fellow-countrymen. They immediately resolved to enhance it, by making a vigorous charge along the causeway which connected that city with Mexico; and, with the aid of the brigantines (which, after giving chase to the Mexican boats,

* Napoleon.

approached the causeway), this division of the




my succeeded in making a victorious advance more than a league upon the causeway.

At the point of the causeway where Cortes and

his brigantines arrived, after chasing the Mexican boats into the city, there happened to be one or two idol towers, surrounded by a low stone wall. He landed, took the towers after a sharp contest, and then brought up three heavy cannon from the brigantines. The causeway was crowded with the enemy from that spot to the very gates of Mexico; and, moreover, there were numbers of canoes, on that side at least of the causeway where the brigantines were not, or where they could not get at them. Cortes brought one of the guns to bear upon the dense masses of the enemy, and the effect of that fire must have been tremendous. Happily for the Mexicans, there was a deficiency of powder, arising from the carelessness of an artilleryman, by which a quantity had been ignited; and thus Cortes was unable to follow up this advantage.

Cortes lands on the southern causeway.

The Spanish Commander had originally intended to proceed to the camp at Cuyoacan; but, with that power of rapidly changing his plans which is one of the elements in the character of a great general, he determined to take up a position at the spot where he now was, and to summon reinforcements both from Sandoval's and

Olid's camp. That first night was a night of much danger for the "Camp of the Causeway," as Cortes calls it, as the Mexicans, notwithstanding the defeat and loss which they had suffered during the day, made a midnight attack upon the Spaniards. Cortes, however, had not failed to send at once to Sandoval at Iztapalapa for all the gunpowder which was in that camp; and, as each brigantine had a small field-gun (*tiro pequeño de campo*), the Spaniards were enabled to make a vigorous resistance. Thus the enemy were beaten off for that night.

The "Camp of the Causeway."

The next morning, at early dawn, reinforcements arrived at the Camp of the Causeway, and they hardly had arrived, before the Mexicans issued from the city and commenced their attack, both by land and by water, and with such shouts and yells, that it seemed as if heaven and earth were coming together. But "loud cries divide no flesh," while the thunder of cannon significantly represents the destruction it accompanies. The Spaniards succeeded in gaining one bridge and one barricade, and drove the Mexicans back

The second day's siege.

to the nearest houses of the city. The brigantines were upon the east side of the causeway, and, consequently, the canoes could approach with less danger on the western side. Cortes, alert to seize every advantage, broke up a small portion of the causeway near his camp, and made four brigantines pass through it. He was thus enabled to drive back the western fleet of canoes into the water-streets of the city. The rest of the brigantines not only put to flight the enemy on their side of the causeway, but, finding * canals into which they could enter securely, they were enabled to capture several of the Mexican canoes, and also to burn many houses in the suburbs. Thus ended the second day of the siege.

On the next morning Sandoval fought his way from Iztapalapa to Cuyoacan, and afterwards arrived at the "Camp of the Causeway" in time to take part in a little battle, in which he was

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* In the course of the siege several circumstances occur which show how immense must have been the size of Mexico. Notwithstanding their former stay in the city, it appears from the expression "finding," that the Spaniards were up to that time ignorant of the existence of those canals.

wounded. For six days the fighting continued much in the same manner as when Cortes first arrived, the brigantines, however, gaining great advantages, especially by means of a large canal which they discovered, that went all round the city, and enabled them to penetrate into some of the densest parts of it, and thus to do considerable damage. They had now so completely quelled the small craft of the Mexicans, that no canoe ventured to approach within a quarter of a league of the "Camp of the Causeway."

The brigantines enter a great canal.

On the seventh or eighth day, Pedro de Alvarado sent from Tlacuba to inform Cortes that there was a causeway * at the other end of the town, by which the Mexicans went in and out as they pleased. This was the causeway which led to Tepejacac. Upon receiving this intelligence, Cortes sent the Alguazil Mayor to occupy a posi-

Another causeway discovered.

* The error, as it seems to me, in the general descriptions of Mexico, given both by the conquerors and those who came after them, is in not mentioning causeways enough. There was another little causeway close to this large one, which also was connected with the terra firma, and was commanded by Sandoval's camp. There is still a causeway unaccounted for, according to the most ancient map of Mexico.

tion in front of this newly-discovered causeway. He took this step because he felt that it was re-




quisite in order to complete the investment of the place: otherwise, as he remarks, he would have

been more glad of the Mexicans going out of the city than they could have been themselves, for he well knew how to deal with them in the open plain. From that day forward, the city of Mexico was entirely invested.

Sandoval sent to that quarter.

Mexico entirely invested.

We must now turn for a moment from the besiegers to the besieged. When Quauhtemotzin, the Priest-King of Mexico, perceived that the siege had commenced in earnest,—and with sieges, as appears from Mexican architecture, these warriors were well acquainted,—he summoned a great council of his lords and captains. Then, laying before them the state in which they were,—the revolt of many of their tributary provinces, the want of fresh water, the strength of the brigantines, the destruction which had already taken place of some of the principal posts of defence, the dangers and miseries to which they must look forward,—he asked what was their opinion about coming to terms with the Spaniards? In reply to the Monarch's question the young men and the warriors expressed their desire for war.*

Quauhtemotzin's speech to his council.

Their voice was for a continuance of the war.

* "Los Mancebos, y Gente gallarda, queria la Guerra."—Torquemada, *Monarquia Indiana*, lib. iv. cap. 90

There were others, however, who said, that as they had four Spaniards and several Indians whom they had taken, and were about to sacrifice, they should be in no haste to do so, in order that, if things went worse with them, they might in a few days' time, through the medium of these prisoners, commence negotiations. Others, again, more religiously inclined, maintained that their only course was, with many sacrifices and prayers, to commend themselves to the gods, whose cause was at stake;* and that the Mexican people should trust in the goodness of these superior beings not to forsake them.

The fanatical counsel prevailed. Not, I think, that even in Mexico there were not wise men enough to have contended against such fanaticism; but, from the former conduct of the Spaniards, there was so little to be said on the other side. In truth,—as the son-in-law of Montezuma afterwards informed the historian Oviedo,†—after the attack of Alvarado upon the unarmed chiefs in the temple, the Mexicans put no more

* Torquemada, "Monarquía Indiana," lib. iv. cap. 90.

† Oviedo, "Hist. Gen. y Nat." lib. xxxiii. cap. 54.

trust in the Spaniards. This man, Pedro de Alvarado, was one of the most pernicious adventurers of those times. It seldom happens to any one person to be a mighty cause of mischief, almost the cause of downfal, to two great empires; but such were Alvarado's fortunes, as may be seen in the histories of Peru and Mexico, the latter of which he ruined directly, and the former indirectly, and in both cases by acts of wonderful audacity and folly. It has often surprised me that Cortes should have placed so much confidence in such a man; but distinguished personal bravery is such an advantage,—and it was much more so in those times than in the present,—that Cortes may well be excused for putting his trust in a man who, at least, was never known to falter in action.

Pedro de Alvarado, a pernicious conqueror.

The councillors who were in favour of negotiation had, therefore, little or nothing to urge for their view of the question but the probability of more and larger disasters occurring if their advice were not followed. Finally, they were overruled; and the prisoners were sacrificed. The gods being thus appeased, their responses became gracious; and the King braced up all his energies for war.

The King determines upon war.

"Some have been of opinion," says the Spanish historian of the Indies, "that the Devil was not in the habit of appearing to the Indians, and that if he did appear to them at all, it was very seldom: and that the responses of the gods were the invention of the priests to preserve the authority which these men had over that people."* The Priest-King must have known well the nature of the visions and revelations which were reported to the common people; but the fate of Montezuma was before his eyes. The people were for war; the Spaniards were few; and there would not be wanting those who could calculate, as on a former occasion, how many Mexicans might be advantageously sacrificed for one Spaniard. The Tlascalans and all the Indian allies of the Spaniards were as nothing in the eyes of the Mexicans; and so the war was again resumed with fury.†

Cortes resolves upon a general attack.

Cortes now determined to make a combined attack upon the city. For this purpose, on the

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* Herrera, "Hist. de las Indias," dec. III. lib. i. cap. 17.

† It is impossible to say at what precise time this council took place, for, as may be conceived, we know so much less of what took place amongst the besieged than amongst the besiegers.

eighth or ninth day after the beginning of the siege, he sent for additional forces from the Camp




of Cuyoacan, where he was still obliged to leave a detachment, in order to protect the rear from

any attack that might be made by the inhabitants of Xochimilco, Culuocan, Iztapalapa, Mexicaltzinco, and other places neighbouring to the lake, which had "rebelled," according to Spanish phraseology, that is, which had renewed their allegiance to their old friends and masters, the Mexicans. The combined attack was arranged by Cortes in the following manner. The swordsmen, crossbowmen, and musketeers were to form the advance-guard; they were to be supported by brigantines on both sides of the causeway; and a small body of horse was to keep guard on the causeway in the rear of the foot-soldiers. Some cavalry also were to accompany the attacking force. The number of the allies who, according to his own account, were to march with Cortes on this occasion, amounted to no less than eighty thousand; and the siege was to be pressed at two other points, by the Alguazil Mayor and Pedro de Alvarado. It is manifest, therefore, that the Mexicans would have enough to do on this day.

The general attack commenced.

Cortes moved from the Camp of the Causeway early in the morning. The first obstacle his troops met with was a breach in the causeway, which the Mexicans must have made in the night. The aperture was as broad as a lance is long, and

its depth was equal to its breadth. The Mexicans had also made a barricade on the other side, and were posted behind it. There the battle commenced, and was very stoutly maintained on both sides. At last the Spaniards succeeded in forcing this position, and marched along the causeway, until they came to the entrance of the city, where there was an idol tower, at the foot of which had been a very large bridge—probably, in part, a drawbridge. This had been lifted up, or destroyed, and on the other side a strong barricade had been formed. This point of defence was much stronger than the last, for the breadth of the opening was much greater, and, in fact, it was a very broad water-street (*una calle de agua muy ancha.*) Here, therefore, the Mexicans were strongly posted; but again they were beaten back by the aid of the brigantines, which, it is easy to see, had the great advantage of being able to deploy to the right and the left in the water-street, and so, with their small cannon, cross-bowmen, and musketeers, to take the Mexicans in the flank. By these means they were enabled to dislodge the enemy, which feat, as Cortes himself observes, it would have been impossible to effect without their assistance.

First position of the Mexicans.

Second position.

Brigantines of great service to the Spaniards.

The defenders of the barricade being put to flight, the Spaniards from the brigantines leapt on shore, and, with their assistance, the whole army contrived to pass the water. Here it was that the Indian allies were eminently useful. They were immediately employed in filling up with stones and sun-burnt bricks that part of the water-street which formerly the bridge had spanned; and it is evident that Cortes himself, who always understood where the real difficulty lay in any action, superintended this filling up. His words are, "while *we* filled up this bridge (meaning bridge-way), the Spaniards took another barricade in the great street of the town." For the sake of clearness, I will give a name to this street, and call it the "High Street." It may be noticed, in the most ancient map of Mexico, that there is no difference in the breadth of this street from that of the main causeway. There was no water in it, and, therefore, the Spanish troops were in their element upon it, and could act with force and rapidity. The Mexicans fled until they came to another draw-bridge, which had been taken away, all but one broad beam, over which they passed, and then removed it.

Use of the Indian allies.

Third position of the Mexicans.

On the other side, these resolute and untiring men had thrown up another barricade constructed of clay and sun-burnt bricks. This was a very formidable defence. The Spaniards had now advanced beyond the support of their brigantines; and there was no passing, except by throwing themselves into the water. The houses which commanded the street were crowded with the Mexicans, who showered down missiles from the terraced house-tops; and those who were in charge of the barricade fought like lions. The potent voice, however, of cannon made itself heard above all the noise of the engagement. It was the exact situation in which cannon would come in with the greatest effect, and Cortes had brought two field-pieces with him. The Spaniards seized an opportunity, when the Mexicans gave way before these cannon (which must have swept them down like corn before a tempest), dashed into the water, and passed to the other side. It shows the vigorous resistance which these brave Mexicans made, that it took no less than two hours to wrest this position from them. The barricade, however, being at last deserted, together with the terraces and house-tops, the whole of the

The third position of the Mexicans taken.

assaulting party passed over the bridge-way. Cortes, again, instantly made good the road by filling up the place where the bridge had been, for which materials were ready to his hand in those of the barricade.

The Spanish troops, and all the Indian allies that were not wanted for filling up the bridge-way, pushed on, without encountering any obstacle, for a distance of "two cross-bow shots" in length, until they came to a spot where there was a bridge that adjoined the principal Plaza* in the town—where the best houses were situated. The Mexicans had not imagined that the Spaniards could in one day gain so advanced a position. They had accordingly made no preparations at this bridge. They had neither removed it, nor thrown up a barricade on the other side. The Plaza was so full of Mexicans that it could scarcely hold them. To command its entrance, the Spaniards brought up a cannon, the discharges from which must have made fearful havoc in this crowd; finally, the Spaniards charged into the Plaza, driving the Mexicans

* This spot is marked "Platea" in the ancient map.

before them into the great square of the Temple, which adjoined and communicated with the Plaza. The Spaniards and their allies continued the charge, forced the Mexicans out of the square, occupied it themselves, and took possession of the towers on the Temple.

The Plaza occupied by the Spaniards,

Then the temple.

The Mexicans, however, perceiving that the Spaniards had no horsemen with them, turned upon their enemies with immense vigour, dislodged them from the towers, drove them from the great court of the Temple, swept on with irresistible fury, cleared the Spaniards out of the Plaza and into the High Street again, at the same time capturing the single field-piece which had done so much mischief. The Spaniards were retreating in much confusion, when "it pleased God," as Cortes says, "that three horsemen should enter the Plaza." The Mexicans seem to have had a most unreasonable dread of horses. If Montezuma, in his immense collection of animals, had possessed but one horse, and the people had learnt what a docile, timid slave a horse is, the Conquest of Mexico would have been postponed for some time — perhaps to another generation. At this juncture, however, the

The Mexicans turn upon the enemy and drive them back.

Mexicans were not afraid of these three horsemen alone, but, seeing them enter the narrow pathway, supposed them to be the front rank of a body of horse. They, accordingly, retreated in their turn. The Spaniards, from being the pursued, became the pursuers; some of them re-entered the great square; and a fight took place on the summit of the Temple between four or five Spaniards and ten or twelve of the chief men among the Mexicans, which ended in the defeat and slaughter of all these chiefs. A few more horsemen now entered the square, which by this time was probably clear of the Mexicans; and these Spaniards contrived an ambuscade, which was successful, and by which thirty Mexicans were killed.

Spaniards successful again.

It was now evening, and Cortes gave orders for the recall of the troops; but this backward movement was not executed without considerable danger, for, though the Mexicans must have suffered terribly that day, "the dogs came on so rabidly" (*venian los perros tan rabiosos*), that even the dreaded horsemen could not drive them back or prevent them from molesting the rear-guard of the Spaniards. They, however, reached the

Camp of the Causeway in safety, their chief triumph in the day's work being, that they had burnt the principal houses in the High Street. The Spaniards, therefore, would have nothing to dread next time from the terraces of these houses.

Result of the day's work.

I have been thus minute in describing this day's proceedings, in order that the narrative may serve to explain future encounters, and give the reader some idea of the defences of Mexico, and of the means of attack which the Spaniards had in their power.

There was rest in the Camp of the Causeway for a day or two; but these were very gainful days for Cortes, as not only did his new friend and ally, the King of Tezcuco, send him thirty thousand warriors under the command of his brother Ixtlilxochitl, called by Cortes "Istrichil," but (such are the charms of success!) the inhabitants of Xochimilco and of certain *pueblos* of the Otomies, who were the slaves of the King of Mexico, joined the ranks of the besiegers.

Cortes, finding that he had more brigantines than he needed, assigned three to Sandoval and three to Alvarado. He then prepared for an-

other great attack upon the city, telling his new Indian allies that they must now show whether they really were friends.

A second great attack.

Early in the morning, on the fourth day after the entrance into the city above recorded, Cortes commenced his second attack, accompanied by a very large body of his Indian allies (*que era infinita gente*). The short respite, however, which the Mexicans had enjoyed in these three days, had enabled them to undo all that the Spaniards had done, and to make all the defences much stronger. The result was, that the Spaniards did not advance further than the Plaza,—though there, and in its neighbourhood, they perpetrated an act of destruction which went to the hearts of the Mexicans. Cortes says that the determination manifested by the Mexicans on this day convinced him of two things:—that there would be very little spoil, and that the Mexicans would have to be totally destroyed.* His efforts, there-

* "Viendo que estos de la Ciudad estaban rebeldes, y mostraban tanta determinacion de morir, ó defenderse, colegí de ellos dos cosas: la una, que habiamos de haber poca, ó ninguna de la riqueza, que nos habian tomado; y la otra, que daban ocasion, y nos forzaban á que totalmente les destruyessemos."—LORENZANA, p. 254.

fore, were now directed to see how he could mortify and depress them most, and so bring them, as he says, to a perception of their error. With this view, he on this day caused the palace of Montezuma's father to be destroyed, that palace where the Spaniards had been so hospitably received on their first coming to Mexico. The Spaniards also destroyed some adjacent buildings, which, though they were somewhat smaller than the palace, were even more delightful and beautiful (*mas frescas y gentiles*), and in which Montezuma had placed his aviary. This destruction must have been a pitiable sight, and Cortes was doubtless sincere in expressing great regret at being obliged to have recourse to such a proceeding. He had, however, the conqueror's ready excuse, that, though it distressed him, it distressed the enemy much more.* Having set fire to these buildings, the Spaniards retired, the Mexicans attacking them in the rear with great

The palace of Montezuma's father destroyed.

Also the Aviary.

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* "Y aunque á mí me pesó mucho de ello, porque á ellos les pesaba mucho mas, determiné de las quemar, de que los Enemigos mostraron harto pesar, y tambien los otros sus Aliados de las Ciudades de la Laguna."—Lorenzana, p. 255.

fury. But the culminating point of vexation for the Mexicans, on that day, must have been to see their former slaves, the Otomies, ranged against them. Bitter were the cannibal threats which passed between the Mexicans and the Indian allies of the Spaniards.

The next day, very early, after having heard mass, which was never omitted, the Spaniards returned to the attack, and, early though it was, the indefatigable Mexicans had repaired two-thirds of all that the Spaniards had destroyed on the preceding day. The Spaniards obtained no signal success this day, nor indeed for many days together, though each day they destroyed much, and made some further advance into the town. This comparative slowness of movement is partly to be accounted for by their ammunition falling short. Notwithstanding this, the Spanish division under Cortes succeeded in taking several bridges which were in one of the principal streets,—namely, that which led to Tlacuba. It was a great object to gain this street, in order to effect a communication between the two camps of Cortes and Alvarado. Each day, the proceedings were very much like those on the first day, which I

have described in detail. In the evening the Spaniards retreated, and then the Mexicans pursued them fiercely; "gluttonously" is the apt word which Cortes employs in speaking of this cannibal people.*

Meanwhile, the inhabitants of the cities bordering on the lake, appreciating the success of the Spanish General, came and demanded pardon for their past offences, and offered alliance for the future. Cortes employed them most usefully in providing some shelter for his troops encamped on the causeway. He takes this opportunity of illustrating, in his letter to Charles the Fifth, the magnitude of the causeway, stating that the little town which was built to shelter the Spaniards and their allies, in all two thousand men,† was placed entirely on the causeway, there being room for a house on each side, and for a road between, which was sufficiently wide for men and horses to move along it "much at their ease."‡

New alliances.

Magnitude of the causeway.

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* "Como ellos venían tan golosos tras nosotros."—Lorenzana, p. 258.

† The main body was always stationed at Cuyoacan.

‡ "Y vea Vuestra Magestad, que tan ancha puede ser la Calzada, que va por lo mas hondo de la Laguna, que

It remains now to be seen what the other divisions of the besiegers had been able to effect; and as, fortunately, Bernal Diaz was in Alvarado's division, we have a good account of what took place in that quarter. Their hardships and difficulties seem to have exceeded those of the division which Cortes commanded. They were not so much molested from the flat roofs of houses; but the breaches in the causeway on their side were more formidable, and their first attacks were made without the support of any brigantines. Bernal Diaz gives a vivid picture of the severe toils and hardships they had to endure. He speaks of their many wounds,* of the hail of darts, arrows, and stones, which they had to encounter, of the mortification of finding, after they had gained some bridge-way or barricade with great labour in the course of any day,

Trials of the men in Alvarado's division.

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de la una parte, y de la otra iban estas Casas, y quedaba en medio hecha Calle, que muy á placer á pié, y á caballo ibamos, y veníamos por ella."—Lorenzana, p. 260.

* Each day a new standard-bearer was required. "Pues quiero dezir de nuestros Capitanes, y Alfereces, y compañeros de vandera, que saliamos llenos de heridas, y las vanderas rotas, y digo, que cada dia aviamos menester un Alferez."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 151.

that the same work had to be done again the next morning. He also mentions the poorness of their food, which consisted of maize cakes, some herbs called *quilites*, and cherries. He describes the unwearied resolution and the craft of the Mexicans: how they dug deep pits underneath the water, so that the Spaniards, in their daily retreats, might unadvisedly fall into them; and how they drove stakes into the bed of the lake, which prevented the brigantines from approaching.

At last, Alvarado took a step somewhat similar to that which Cortes had adopted from the first, namely, making a small camp on the causeway, in a spot very similar to that which Cortes had chosen, where there were some idol-towers, and an open place in which the Spaniards could build their huts. These huts, however, having been hastily thrown up, were no defence against the wet; and, after a hard day's fighting the soldiers had to tend their wounds* amidst rain,

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* The division of Pedro de Alvarado had, however, one great advantage in a soldier named Juan Catalan, who cured wounds by making the sign of the cross over them, and by incantation. "Un soldado que se dezia Juan Catalan que nos las santiguava, y ensalmava, y

wind, and cold, which they did in the roughest manner, burning them with hot oil, and then compressing them with the blankets of the country, after which they ate, amid great heaps of mud, what Bernal Diaz calls, "those wretched maize cakes" (*essa miséria de tortillas*).

Of these things, however, they would probably have thought but little, but for the extreme severity of the out-post duty, which was managed in the following manner. When they had taken any barricade, bridge, or difficult pass, forty soldiers kept guard there from evening until midnight; these were then relieved by forty other soldiers, who watched from midnight until two o'clock. This second watch was called, in the Spanish armies, "the watch of lethargy," or more generally, as soldiers are given to be brief, "the lethargy" (*la modorra*). The first forty soldiers, when relieved, were not allowed to return to the camp, but lay down where they were, and went

Mode of relieving guard.

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verdaderamente digo, que hallavamos que Nuestro Señor Jesu Christo era servido de darnos esfuerço demas de las muchas mercedes que cada dia nos hazia, y de presto sanavan."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 151. In those days any escape from a regular practitioner was a great blessing.

to sleep. At two o'clock another company of forty soldiers relieved guard in the same fashion, so that at break of day there were a hundred and twenty soldiers at the pass. On those nights when an attack was apprehended, which was often the case, the whole company watched throughout the night.

It may easily be imagined that soldiers enduring daily such hardships would make tremendous efforts to bring the siege to a conclusion, which would sometimes be very imprudent and lead to signal reverses. So it fared with Alvarado's troops, for whom the Mexicans laid a very crafty ambuscade. In a deep and broad aperture of the causeway, where there had been a bridge, they made holes, and, at the same time, placed stakes to prevent the brigantines from acting, also fortifying the side of the aperture which they occupied. They then disposed their force in the following manner. They posted one division at the aperture; another at a spot within the town; and a third was appointed to take the Spaniards in the rear from Tlacuba.* The attack

The Mexicans prepare an ambuscade for Alvarado's troops.

* It would seem, therefore, that the investment of

then commenced. The Spaniards repelled the first division of the Mexicans, and passed over this aperture at a spot where it was tolerably easy to ford, and where the holes had not been dug. Meanwhile, the third division of the Mexicans, acting in the rear, occupied all the attention of the Spanish cavalry. Alvarado, unlike the prudent Cortes, had not taken any step to see that a road lay open for retreat, and nothing was done to the aperture after it had been passed by the infantry. The victorious Spaniards pressed forwards into the town, gained two barricades, and found themselves in the midst of some large houses* and oratory towers. At this spot, nu-

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Mexico was yet incomplete, unless, indeed, there was some side street unobserved by the Spaniards, by which the Mexicans could approach that part of the causeway which was near Alvarado's camp.

* It is very desirable, both for the purposes of this siege, and also in order to understand the degree of civilization to which the Mexicans had attained in some things, to try and form some idea of their houses. The best account of a Mexican house which I have met with, is to be found in the letter sent by the town council of Vera Cruz to Charles the Fifth, immediately after the founding of that town. This account had reference only to the houses in the country towns, or in the country,

merous bands of warriors poured out from their hiding-place; those Mexicans who had fled before the Spaniards, having drawn them on sufficiently, now turned upon them; and the

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which the expedition had seen on its way from Cozumel to Vera Cruz. It begins thus: "There are certain large and well-arranged *pueblos*: the houses, in those parts where they have stone, are built of lime and squared stone; and the rooms are small and low, very much after the Moorish fashion (*muy amoriscados*); and in those parts where they have no stone, they build their houses of sun-burnt bricks, and plaster them over, and the roofs are of straw. There are houses belonging to the chiefs which are very airy, and with many rooms, for we have seen more than six court-yards (*patois*) in some houses, and the apartments very well arranged—each principal service by itself ("*cada principal servicio que ha de ser por si;*" and within the houses are wells and tanks (*albergas*) also rooms for the slaves and people of service, of whom they have many. Outside these houses, at the entrance, there is a large raised court, or even more than one, ascended by steps, and very well built, where they have their mosques, and their oratories, and their terraced walks, which go all round, and are very broad, and there they keep their idols, made of stone, or wood, or clay."—*Doc. Inéd.*, tom. i. p. 454.

It may be conjectured that many of the private houses in the capital were still better built: and it will be easily seen that such houses were soon convertible into fortresses. Peter Martyr, obtaining his intelligence from

Alvarado's division put to flight.

Spaniards, unable to resist the combined attack, were soon put to flight. On fighting their way back to the great aperture, they found that the fordable part of it was occupied by a fleet of canoes, and that it was necessary to pass where the Mexicans had made the passage most dangerous. Here the enemy succeeded in laying hold of five Spaniards (it was always their object to take them alive for sacrifice), and the historian himself with much difficulty escaped from their grasp. He tells us, that when he reached dry land he fell senseless, overcome by the loss of blood, and by the exertions he had made; "And I say," he adds, "that when they clawed hold of me, in thought I commended myself to Our Lord God and to Our Lady his Blessed Mother, and I put forth my strength, whereby I saved myself, thanks be to God for the mercies which he shows unto me."

The Mexicans, emboldened by their success, made a vigorous attack upon Alvarado's camp that day, but were repelled by cannon.

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one of the messengers sent to Charles the Fifth by Cortes, says that the roofs of the Mexican houses were made of a bituminous substance: "Tecta non tegulis sed bitumine quodam terreo vestiunt."—Dec. v. cap. 10.

Cortes was very angry when he heard of this disaster, and gave orders that, henceforward, on




no occasion should the Spaniards advance without securing a pathway for their retreat. He went over himself to see Alvarado's camp. But when

Three-fourths of the city taken.

he found how much they had done, and how far they had advanced, he could not blame them, he said, as much as he had done. In truth, by this time, three-fourths of the city had been taken, that is, three-fourths in magnitude, but not in density, for the densest part of the population lay in the district of the city, called Tlatelulco, round about the market-place, which was the oldest part of the town.

The camp of Gonsalvo de Sandoval was not blessed with a chronicler, and so we do not know anything of what passed in it; but we may conclude, from the well-approved valour of its commander, that it was a worthy rival to the others in heroic deeds.

The great aperture, which had already cost several lives to Alvarado's division, was not filled up without the loss of six more Spanish soldiers and four days of time. No mention is made of the loss of the Tlascalans, which, no doubt, was very severe, for they fought with exceeding bravery * throughout the war; but in any retreat—and the

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* "Nuestros amigos los de Tlascala nos ayudavan en toda la guerra mui como varones."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 151.

close of each day was generally a retreat with the Spaniards—these allies were a terrible embarrassment, and the first object was to clear the causeway of them before the Mexicans came down with the final tiger-like* spring with which they were wont to wind up the day's fighting.

It must not be supposed that the check which Alvarado's division had received, was altogether owing to his thoughtlessness. There was a keen rivalry amongst the several divisions; and it was a point of honour with them, which should gain the market-place first. Now, to enter the market-place, it was necessary to penetrate amongst an "infinite" number of *azoteas*, bridges, and broken causeways: indeed, each house was a sort of island fortress.† The commanders had to endure much importunity from their men: "Why not," they doubtless exclaimed, "make a continuous attack, instead of withdrawing in this way each day, and

The common soldiers impatient.

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* "Venian tan bravosos como tigres, y pié con pié se juntaron con nosotros."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 151.

† "En tal manera, que en cada Casa, por donde habiamos de ir, estaba hecha como Isla en medio de el Agua."—Lorenzana, p. 263.

having so much of our work to do over and over again?" Cortes himself felt that remarks of this kind would occur to any reader of his despatches; and, accordingly, he informs the Emperor, that what looked so feasible could not be done, for two reasons. If they did not retreat at night-fall, as had been their practice, they must either move their camp into the Plaza, or into the square of the great Temple, and thus they would be in the midst of the enemy, and liable to attack from morning till night. Or, on the other hand, they must keep their camp where it was, and establish outposts at the passes which they gained,—and if this latter alternative were adopted, he thought there would be too much work for the men, and such as they could not endure.* It may be inferred from this explanation, that Cortes was

Reasons of Cortes for retreating every evening.

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* "Porque teniendo el Real en la Ciudad cada noche, y cada hora, como ellos eran muchos, y nosotros pocos, nos dieran mil rebatos, y pelearan con nosotros, y fuera el trabajo incomportable, y podian darnos por muchas partes. Pues guardar las Puentes Gente de noche, quedaban los Españoles tan cansados de pelear el día, que no se podia sufrir poner Gente en guarda de ellos." —Lorenzana, p. 257.

more careful of his troops than Alvarado of his: we have already seen what severe watches were requisite in that division, and how ill the men fared.

The impatience of the soldiers grew to a great height, and was supported in an official quarter, —by no less a person than Alderete, the King's Treasurer. Cortes gave way, against his own judgment, to their importunities. There had all along been a reason for his reluctance, which, probably, he did not communicate to his men: namely, that he had not abandoned the hope that the enemy would still come to terms. "Finally," he says, "they pressed me so much that I gave way."

A general attack resolved upon.

The attack was to be a general one, in which the divisions of Sandoval and Alvarado were to co-operate; but Cortes, with that knowledge of character which belonged to him, particularly explained, that, though his general orders were for them to press into the market-place, they were not obliged to gain a single difficult pass which laid them open to defeat; "For," he says, "I knew, from the men they were, that they would advance to whatever spot I told them to

gain, even if they knew that it would cost them their lives."*

On the appointed day, Cortes moved from his camp, supported by seven brigantines, and by more than three thousand canoes filled with his Indian allies. When his soldiers reached the entrance of the city, he divided them in the following manner. There were three streets which led to the market-place from the position which the Spaniards had already gained. Along the principal street, the King's Treasurer, with seventy Spaniards, and fifteen or twenty thousand allies, was to make his way. His rear was to be protected by a small guard of horsemen.

Dispositions on the side of Cortes for the attack.

The other two streets were smaller, and led from the street of Tlacuba to the market-place. Along the broader of these two streets, Cortes sent two of his principal captains, with eighty Spaniards and ten thousand Indians; he himself, with eight horsemen, seventy-five foot-soldiers, twenty-five musketeers, and an "infinite number"

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* "Conocia de sus Personas, que habian de poner el rostro, donde yo les dijesse, aunque supiessen perder las vidas."—LORENZANA, p. 265.

of allies, was to enter the narrower street. At the entrance to the street of Tlacuba, he left two large cannon with eight horsemen to guard them, and at the entrance of his own street, he also left eight horsemen to protect the rear.

The great attack commenced.

The Spaniards and their allies made their entrance into the city with even more success and less embarrassment than on previous occasions. Bridges and barricades were gained, and the three main bodies of the army moved forwards into the heart of the city. The ever-prudent Cortes did not follow his division, but remained with a small body-guard of twenty Spaniards in a little island formed by the intersection of certain water streets, whence he encouraged the allies, who were occasionally beaten back by the Mexicans, and where he could protect his own troops against any sudden descent of the enemy from certain side streets.

Cortes in an islet.

His men ask leave to press on into the city.

He now received a message from those Spanish troops who had made a rapid and successful advance into the heart of the town, informing him that they were not far from the market-place, and that they wished to have his permission to push onwards, as they already heard the noise of

the combats which the Alguazil Mayor and Pedro de Alvarado were waging from their respective




stations. To this message Cortes returned for answer that on no account should they move

forwards without first filling up the apertures thoroughly. They sent an answer back, stating that they had made completely passable all the ground they had gained; and that he might come and see whether it were not so.

Cortes, like a wise commander, not inclined to admit anything as a fact upon the statement of others which could be verified by personal inspection, took them at their word, and did move on to see what sort of pathway they had made; when, to his dismay, he came in sight of a breach in the causeway, of considerable magnitude, being ten or twelve paces in width, and which, far from being filled up with solid material, had been passed upon wood and reeds, and was entirely insecure in case of retreat. The Spaniards, "intoxicated with victory," as their Commander describes them, had rushed on, imagining that they left behind them a sufficient pathway.

They had not made good the pathway.

There was now no time to remedy this lamentable error, for when Cortes arrived near this "bridge of affliction," as he calls it, he saw many of the Spaniards and the allies retreating towards it, and when he came up close to it, he found the bridge-way broken down, and the whole

aperture so full of Spaniards and Indians, that there was not room for a straw to float upon the surface of the water. The peril was so imminent, that Cortes not only thought that the Conquest of Mexico was gone, but that the term of his life as well as of his victories had come; and he resolved to die there fighting. All that he could do at first was to help his men out of the water; and, meanwhile, the Mexicans charged upon them in such numbers, that he and his little party were entirely surrounded. The enemy seized upon his person, and would have carried him off, but for the resolute bravery of some of his guard, one of whom lost his life there in succouring his master. The greatest aid, however, that Cortes had at this moment of urgent peril, was the cruel superstition of the Mexicans, which made them wish to take Malinché alive, and grudge the death of an enemy in any other way than that of sacrifice to their detestable gods. The captain of the body-guard seized hold of Cortes, and insisted upon his retreating, declaring that upon his life depended the lives of all of them. Cortes, though at the moment he felt that he should have delighted more in death than life,

Cortes in urgent peril.

gave way to the importunity of this captain, and of other Spaniards who were near, and commenced




retreat for his life. His flight was along a narrow causeway at the same level as the water, an

additional circumstance of danger, which, to use his expression about them, those "dogs" had contrived against the Spaniards. The Mexican canoes approached this causeway on both sides, and the slaughter they were thus enabled to commit, both among the allies and the Spaniards, was very great. Meanwhile, two or three horses were sent to aid Cortes in his retreat, and a youth upon one of them contrived to reach him, though the others

His escape.

were lost. At last he and a few of his men succeeded in fighting their way to the broad street

Cortes gains the street of Tlacuba.

of Tlacuba, where, like a brave captain, instead of continuing his flight, he and the few horsemen who were with him turned round and formed a rear-guard to protect his retreating troops. He also sent immediate orders to the King's Treasurer and the other commanders to make good their retreat; orders the force of which was much heightened by the sight of two or three Spaniards' heads which the Mexicans, who were fighting behind a barricade, threw amongst the besiegers.

Alvarado's division.

We must now see how it fared with the other divisions. Alvarado's men had prospered in their attack, and were steadily advancing towards the market-place, when, all of a sudden, they found

themselves encountered by an immense body of Mexican troops, splendidly accoutred, who threw before them five heads of Spaniards, and kept shouting out "Thus will we slay you, as we have slain Malinché and Sandoval, whose heads these are." With these words they commenced an attack of such fury, and came so closely to hand with the Spaniards, that they could not use their cross-bows, their muskets, nor even their swords. One thing, however, was in their favour. The difficulty of their retreat was always greatly enhanced by the number of their allies; but on this occasion the Tlascalans no sooner saw the bleeding heads, and heard the menacing words of the Mexicans, than they cleared themselves off the causeway with all possible speed.

The Tlascalans retreat in haste.

The Spaniards, therefore, were able to retreat in good order; and their dismay did not take the form of panic, even when they heard from the summit of the Temple the tones of that awful drum made of serpents' skin, which gave forth the most melancholy sound imaginable, and which was audible at two or three leagues' distance.* This

* "Tañian un atambor de mui triste sonido, en fin

was the signal of sacrifice, and at that moment ten human hearts, the hearts of their companions, were being offered up to the Mexican deities.

The Mexican King sounds his horn.

A more dangerous, though not more dreadful, sound was now to be heard. This was the blast of a horn sounded by no less a personage than the Mexican King — which signified that his captains were to succeed or die. The mad fury with which the Mexican troops now rushed upon the Spaniards was "an awful thing" to see; and the historian, who was present at the scene, writing in his old age, exclaims, that, though he cannot describe it, yet, when he comes to think of it, it is as if it were "visibly" before him,* so deep was the impression it had made upon his mind.

But the Spaniards were not raw troops; and terror, however great, was not able to overcome their sense of discipline and their duty to each other as comrades. It was in vain that the Mexi-

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como instrumento de demonios, y retumbava tanto, que se oia dos, ó tres leguas, y juntamente con él muchos atabalejos."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 152.

* "Con qué rabia y esfuerço se metian entre nosotros á nos echar mano, es cosa de espanto, porque yo no lo sé aquí escrivir, que aora que me pongo á pensar en ello, es como si visiblemente lo viesse."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 152.

cans rushed upon them "as a conquered thing" (*como cosa vencida*); they reached their station, served their cannon steadily—although they had to renew their artillerymen,—and maintained their ground.

The appalling stratagem adopted by the Mexicans—of throwing down before one division of the Spanish army some of the heads of the prisoners they had taken from another division, and shouting that these were the heads of the principal commanders—was pursued with great success. They were thus enabled to discourage Sandoval, and to cause him to retreat with loss towards his quarters. They even tried with success the same stratagem upon Cortes, throwing before his camp, to which he had at last retreated, certain bleeding heads, which, they said, were those of "Tonatiuh" (Alvarado), Sandoval, and the other *teules*. Then it was that Cortes felt more dismay than ever, "though," says the honest chronicler, who did not like the man, however much he admired the soldier, "not in such a manner that those who were with him should perceive in it much weakness."*

Sandoval's division retires.

* "Entonces dizen, que desmayó Cortés mucho mas

After Sandoval had made good his retreat, he set off, accompanied by a few horsemen, for the camp of Cortes, and had an interview with him, of which the following account is given. "O Señor Captain! what is this?" exclaimed Sandoval; "are these the great counsels, and the artifices of war which you have always been wont to show us? How has this disaster happened?" Cortes replied, "O son Sandoval! my sins have permitted this; but I am not so culpable in the business as they may make out, for it is the fault of the Treasurer, Juan de Alderete, whom I charged to fill up that difficult pass where they routed us, but he did not do so, for he is not accustomed to wars, nor to be commanded by superior officers." At this point of the conference, the Treasurer himself, who had approached the captains in order to learn Sandoval's news, exclaimed, that it was Cortes himself who was to blame; that he had encouraged his men to go forward; that he had not charged them to fill up the bridges and bad

Meeting of Sandoval and Cortes after the defeat.

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de lo que antes estava él, y los que consigo traia, mas no de manera que sintiessen en él mucha flaqueza."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 152.

passes,—if he had done so, he (the Treasurer) with his company would have done it;—and, moreover, that Cortes had not cleared the causeway in time, of his Indian allies. Thus they argued and disputed with one another; for hardly anyone is generous in defeat to those with whom he has acted. Indeed, a generosity of this kind, which will not allow a man to comment severely upon the errors of his comrades in misfortune, is so rare a virtue, that it scarcely seems to belong to this planet.

How few remain gentlemen after defeat.

There was little time, however, for altercation, and Cortes was not the man to indulge in more of that luxury for the unfortunate than human nature demanded. He had received no tidings of what had befallen the Camp of Tlacuba, and thither he despatched Sandoval, embracing him and saying, "Look you, since you see that I cannot go to all parts, I commend these labours to you, for, as you perceive, I am wounded and lame. I implore you, take charge of these three camps.* I well know that Pedro de Alvarado

* "Mirá, pues veis que yo no puedo ir á todas partes, á vos os encomiendo estos trabajos, pues veis que estoi

and his soldiers will have behaved themselves as cavaliers, but I fear lest the great force of those dogs should have routed them."

Sandoval at Alvarado's camp.

The scene now changes to the ground near Alvarado's camp. Sandoval succeeded in making his way there, and arrived about the hour of Vespers. He found the men of that division in the act of repelling a most vigorous attack on the part of the Mexicans, who had hoped that night to penetrate into the camp and to carry off all the Spaniards for sacrifice. The enemy were better armed than usual, some of them using the weapons which they had taken from the soldiers of Cortes. At last, after a severe conflict, in which Sandoval himself was wounded, and in which the cannon shots did not suffice to break the serried ranks of the Mexicans,* the Spaniards gained their quarters, and, being under shelter, had some respite from the fury of the Mexican attack.

There, Sandoval, Pedro de Alvarado, and the other principal captains, were standing together

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herido y coxo; ruego os pongais cobro en estos tres reales."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 152.

* "Por mas Mexicanos que llevavan las pelotas, no les podian apartar."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 152.

and relating what had occurred to each of them, when, suddenly, the sound of the sacrificial drum was heard again, accompanied by other musical instruments of a similar dolorous character. From the Camp of Tlacuba the great Temple was perfectly visible, and, when the Spaniards looked up at it for an interpretation of these melancholy tones, they saw their companions driven by blows and buffetings up to the place of sacrifice. The white-skinned Christians were easily to be distinguished amidst the dusky groups that surrounded them. When the unhappy men about to be sacrificed had reached the lofty level space on which these abominations were wont to be committed, it was discerned by their friends and late companions that plumes of feathers were put upon the heads of many of them, and that men, whose movements in the distance appeared like those of winnowers, made the captives dance before the image of Huitzilopochtli. When the dance was concluded, the victims were placed upon the sacrificial stones; their hearts were taken out and offered to the idols; and their bodies hurled down the steps of the Temple. At the bottom of the steps stood "other butchers" who cut off the

Alvarado's men behold the sacrifice of their companions.

arms and legs of the victims, intending to eat these portions of their enemies. The skin of the




face with the beard was preserved. The rest of the body was thrown to the lions, tigers, and ser-

pents. "Let the curious readers consider," says the chronicler, "what pity we must have had for these, our companions, and how we said to one another, 'Oh! thanks be to God, that they did not carry me off to-day to sacrifice me.'"* And certainly no army ever looked upon a more deplorable sight.

There was no time, however, for much contemplation; for, at that instant, numerous bands of warriors attacked the Spaniards on all sides, and fully occupied their attention in the preservation of their own lives.

In modern battles no dialogue.

Modern warfare has lost one great element of the picturesque in narrative, namely, in there being no interchange now of verbal threats and menaces between the contending parties; but in those days it was otherwise, and the Mexicans were able to indulge in the most fierce and malignant language. "Look," they said, "that is the way in which all of you have to die, for our gods have promised this to us many times." To the

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* "Miren los curiosos Lectores que esto leyeren, que ástima terniamos dellos: y deziamos entre nostros: O gracias á Dios, que no me llevaron á mí oy á sacrificar." —Bernal Diaz, cap. 152.

Tlascalans their language was more insulting, and much more minutely descriptive. Throwing to them the roasted flesh of their companions and of the Spanish soldiers, they shouted, "Eat of the flesh of these *teules*, and of your brothers, for we are quite satiated with it; and, look you, for the houses you have pulled down, we shall have to make you build in their place much better ones with stones, and plates of metal, likewise with hewn stone and lime; and the houses will be painted.* Wherefore, continue to assist these *teules*, all of whom you will see sacrificed."

The losses of the Spaniards.

The Mexicans, however, did not succeed in carrying off any more Spaniards for sacrifice that night. The Spanish camp had some few hours of repose, and some time to reckon up their losses, which were very considerable. They lost upwards of sixty of their own men, six horses, two cannon, and a great number of their Indian allies. Moreover, the brigantines had not fared much better on this disastrous day than the land forces.

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* "Y mirad que las casas que aveis derrocado, que os hemos de traer para que las torneis á hazer mui mejores, y con piedras y planchas, y cal y canto, y pintadas."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 152.

But the indirect consequences of this defeat were still more injurious than the actual losses. The allies from the neighbouring cities on the lake deserted the Spaniards, nearly to a man. The Mexicans regained and strengthened most of their positions; and the greatest part of the work of the besiegers seemed as if it would have to be done over again. Even the Tlascalans, hitherto so faithful, despaired of the fortunes of their allies, and could not but believe, with renewed terror, in the potency of the Mexican deities, kindred to, if not identical with, their own. Accordingly they departed to their homes; and in the camp of Cortes no Indian remained but Ixtlilxochitl, the brother of the King of Tezcuco, with about forty friends and relations,—in the camp of Sandoval, the Cacique of Huaxocingo with about fifty men, —and in Pedro de Alvarado's camp, the brave Chichimecatl with two other chiefs and eighty Tlascalans. In a word, not more than two men out of every thousand of the allies remained to aid the Spaniards.

Desertion of the allies.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Consequences of the Defeat—The Siege languishes—Cortes sends aid to his Indian Allies—The Allies return to the Camp of Cortes—The Siege is pressed—The Mexicans will not treat with Cortes—Mexico is taken.*

The Mexican King encourages his tributaries.

THE King of the Mexicans improved his victory by sending round the news of it to his tributaries, informing them how successful he had been, assuring them that he would soon destroy the rest of the Spaniards, and begging them on no account to make peace with the enemy. The vouchers which his messengers carried were two heads of horses and some heads of Christians; and these trophies told the tale of victory in an undeniable manner.

One cannot always sympathize with one's Christian friends, and it is impossible not to feel occasionally some satisfaction when the be-

leaguered party, wronged as they had been in every way by the besiegers, and making one of the most gallant defences ever known in the history of sieges, should gain some advantage. The siege was not absolutely stopped on account of this defeat, but still the city had some relief. In the camp of Alvarado, for instance, where the men had seen but too clearly what was the fate of captives, there was no movement for four days; and, strange to say, the first attack on that side was, according to Cortes, devised and led by Chichimecatl, the brave Tlascalan. In the camp of Cortes little was attempted, and less effected, for ten days; and no entrance was made by the Spaniards which reached so far into the city as the Plaza, a spot which had been gained by them, as may be recollected, at an early stage of the proceedings.

The siege languishes.

The main cause, however, of this apparent inactivity is one which will surprise the reader; but which, when well considered, will give him a great insight into the depth of policy of Cortes. At such a juncture an ordinary commander would have kept all his resources closely about him, and would not have been induced to send away a

Cortes sends assistance to his Indian allies.

single man. But Cortes sent out a considerable force to assist his Indian allies of the town of Cuernavaca, who were suffering from the attack of some hostile Indians of a neighbouring city belonging to the Mexican faction. His own men disapproved of this, as it was natural that they should, and said that it was destruction to take men from the camp.*

Cortes also sent assistance to the Otomies, who were much pressed by the inhabitants of the province of Matalcingo, a people on whose succour the Mexicans at that time placed great dependence.

The expeditions mentioned above were successful. The wounded men in the camp began to recover.† By great good fortune Cortes, at

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* "Tube mucha contradicion, y decian que me destruia en sacar Gente del Real."—LORENZANA, p. 272.

† The few Spanish women who were present at this siege, and of whom honorable mention ought to be made, must have been a great comfort to the wounded Spanish soldiers. One of them, named Beatriz de Palacios, a mulatto, was not only useful in nursing the sick, but she would saddle the horses of her husband's troop, and was known to take his place as sentinel. "Beatriz de Palacios, Mulata, aiudó mucho, quando fué hechado Cortés

this juncture, received some gunpowder and some cross-bows from his town of Villa Rica; and the siege was recommenced.

The politic conduct of Cortes in sending succours to those of his Indian allies who were endangered, must have done good service in bringing them all back to his camp. They began to flock in; and, after receiving a lecture from Cortes, in which he told them that they were deserving of

The Indian allies return to the camp.

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de México, y en este Cerco: era casada con un Soldado, dicho Pedro de Escobar; y sirvió tanto á su Marido, y á los de su Camarada, que hallándose cansado de pelear de Dia, tocándole la Guarda, y Centinela, la hacia por él, con mucho cuidado, y en dexando las Armas, salia al Campo á recoger Bledos, y los tenia cocidos, y adereçados, para su Marido, y los Compañeros. Curaba los Heridos, ensillaba los Caballos, y hacia otras cosas, como qualquiera Soldado; y esta, y otras fueron las que curaron á Cortés, y sus Compañeros, quando llegaron heridos á Tlaxcalla, y les hicieron de vestir, de Lienço de la Tierra, y las que queriendo Cortés, que se quedasen á descansar á Tlaxcalla, le dixeron: que no era bien, que Mugeres Castellanas, dexasen á sus Maridos, yendo á la Guerra, y que adonde ellos muriesen, moririan ellas. Estas fueron, Beatriz de Palacios, Maria de Estrada, Juana Martin, Isabel Rodriguez, y la Muger de Alonso Valiente, y otras."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. iv. cap. 6.

death, they were taken again into his favour, and employed against the common enemy.

Pertinacity of the Mexicans.

On the other hand, the Mexicans remained as stiff-necked as ever. They had already endured forty-five days of siege: their allies had been conquered; and they themselves were beginning to feel the effects of starvation. But their resolution only rose with their difficulties; and misery lent strength to their resolves. "We found them with more spirit than ever,"* is the expression of Cortes in describing their conduct. He, therefore, though very unwillingly, came to the conclusion that he must destroy their city bit by bit, a necessity which must have been a great vexation to him, for he declares that Mexico was "the most beautiful thing in the world" (*la mas hermosa cosa del Mundo*). This plan of destruction he proposed to execute thoroughly, pulling down the houses of every street as he gained it; making that

Cortes resolves to destroy Mexico.

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* "E quanto mas de estas cosas les deciamos, menos muestra viamos en ellos de flaqueza: mas antes en el pelear, y en todos sus ardides, los hallabamos con mas ánimo, que nunca."—LORENZANA, p. 279.

which was lofty, level; and that which was water, dry land.*

On the first day of recommencing the attack, he was met and delayed by feigned proposals for peace; but, these coming to nothing, he began to execute his plan of gradual demolition; and, as he had the assistance of one hundred and fifty thousand Indian allies, and as destruction is always a rapid process, he accomplished great things.

The next day he made his way into the Square, and ascended the highest platform of the Temple, because, as he says, he knew it vexed the enemy much to see him there. A stranger sight, one more animating to the Spaniards, more discouraging to the Mexicans, more picturesque in itself, and fraught with more matter for stern reflection, cannot well be imagined. It was no hideous Idol-god of War that had stepped down from its pedestal, but a majestic living man, clad in resplendent armour, who directed the fight below, and fulfilled the prophecies which had been uttered by the priests and necromancers—those safe and

Not Huitzilopochtli, but Cortes, directs the fight from the summit of the temple.

* "Lo que era Agua, hacerlo Tierra-firme."—LORENZANA, p. 279.

easy prophecies of disaster, sure to be fulfilled, at some time or other, in the life of any man, or any people, prophesied against. When night came on, the Spaniards and their allies retired, pursued by the Mexicans, but still, by means of ambuscades, contriving in their retreat to slay many of their enemies. Thus, with little variation, the siege continued for several days, until, by an ambuscade more dexterous than usual, Cortes contrived to cut off five hundred of the bravest and foremost men of the city, whom his cannibal allies devoured.*

Cortes thinks that the result of the ambuscade just recorded was most advantageous for the besiegers, and was the cause of the city being speedily subdued. But, indeed, it is evident that the brief success which the enemy attained, when Cortes, overcome by importunity, made that injudicious attack upon the city, was the expiring effort of the Mexicans. It appears that they were suffering now the extremes of hunger, going

Famine in Mexico.

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* "Y aquella noche tubieron bien que cenar nuestros Amigos, porque todos los que se mataron, tomaron, y llevaron hechos piezas para comer."—LORENZANA, p. 283.

out at night to fish in the waters about their houses, and seeking a miserable sustenance in herbs and roots. Upon the wretched people so employed Cortes made an onslaught very early in the morning, and slew eight hundred of them, for the most part women and children.

Meanwhile, the Indian allies of Cortes thickened around the contest, as a flock of birds of rapine over carrion, and darkened the outskirts of the devoted city. They came in such multitudes, that, as he himself says, there was no taking any account of them. The proud Mexico, hitherto unconscious of a conqueror, was penetrated by the Spanish forces on all sides, till at length the market-place was gained by the troops of Alvarado, and free communication was opened and maintained between his camp and that of Cortes. It is curious to note the change in the language now addressed by the Mexicans to the Tlascalans and the other Spanish allies. When the townsmen saw these Indians burning and destroying on all sides, they tauntingly bade them continue doing so, as they would have to build up anew what they were then destroying, if not for them (the Mexicans), at least, for their own friends, the

Free communication between the camps of Alvarado and Cortes.

Spaniards.* Cortes afterwards comments upon this prophecy in a manner that is anything but chivalrous or gentlemanly (indeed, conquerors on their own account seldom are distinguished gentlemen),† for he adds, "In this last respect it pleased God that they turned out to be true prophets, for they, the allies, are those who are commencing to rebuild."‡

Cortes now possessed no less than seven-eighths of the city, as he perceived on looking from a great tower which adjoined the market-place. Still, the enemy did not give way, and, as the powder of Cortes was failing, he caused a catapult to be constructed, and placed on a raised platform, twelve feet in height, which was in the middle of the market-place, whereon the Mexicans had been accustomed to hold their games, and

Cortes constructs a catapult.

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* "Decian á nuestros Amigos, que no ficiessen sino quemar, y destruir, que ellos se las harian tornar á hacer de nuevo, porque si ellos eran vencedores, ya ellos sabian, que habia de ser assí, y si no, que las habian de hacer para nosotros."—LORENZANA, p. 286.

† Julius Cæsar always excepted.

‡ "Y de esto postrero plugo á Dios, que salieron verdaderos, aunque ellos son los que las tornan á hacer."—LORENZANA, p. 286.

whereon, as I imagine, gladiatorial shows had been performed. But this catapult was not constructed properly, and failed to terrify the enemy. The greater part of them were now, however, only food for an almost unresisted slaughter, which after two or three days interval, was recommenced. The Spaniards found the streets full of women and children, and other helpless persons, dying of hunger. Cortes renewed his proposals for peace. The warriors in Mexico gave only dissembling answers. The conflict was accordingly renewed, and twelve thousand citizens perished on this occasion, for there was no saving their lives from the cruelty of the Indian allies.*

12,000 Mexicans are slain.

The next day the Mexicans, seeing the multi-udes that were arrayed against them, and that, o use the graphic language of Cortes, there was o room for them, except upon the dead bodies of heir own people, demanded a conference; and, hen Cortes arrived at a certain barricade, he

The Mexicans demand a conference.

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* "Muertos, y presos pasaron de doce mil Animas, n los quales osaban de tanta crueldad nuestros Amigos, ie por ninguna via á ninguno daban la vida, aunque as reprendidos, y castigados de nosotros eran."—Lo-NZANA, p. 291.

was met by some of the principal men. Their address to him savoured of a wild despair, but did not look as if they had any authority to treat for peace. They asked why,—since he was a Child of the Sun, and the Sun in so short a time as one day and one night went round the whole world,—did not Cortes as swiftly finish their slaughter, and release them from such suffering; for now they desired to die, and to go to their Huitzilopochtli, who was waiting for them to rejoice with.* Cortes said everything in reply which could induce them to treat for peace; but all his efforts were in vain. He also sent to them one of their principal chiefs, whom he had captured, and who, after listening to the arguments of Cortes, had promised to do his utmost to promote peace. This Chief was received with reverence by the Mexicans, and brought before

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* "Que pues ellos me tenían por Hijo del Sol, y el Sol en tanta brevedad como era en un dia, y una noche, daba vuelta á todo el Mundo, que porque yo assí brevemente no los acababa de matar, y los quitaba de penar tanto, porque ya ellos tenian deseos de morir, y irse al Cielo para su Ochilobus, que los estaba esperando para descansar."—LORENZANA, p. 292.

Quauhtemotzin, the King; but, it is said, that when he began to talk of peace, the King immediately ordered him to be slain and sacrificed. It seems that the Mexicans, as often happens in difficult negotiation, had lost the power of taking more than one view of their position. They were in that state of mind in which the variations of thought, and the vacillations of temper are alike prevented by a mental process, which, if it were conscious and intentional, might be aptly illustrated by the practice of those desperate or determined captains who nail their colours to the mast. In fine, they were under the dominion of a "fixed idea," and the only answer which Cortes received to his overtures for peace was a furious attack on the part of the Mexicans, who exclaimed that their only wish was to die. Many of them were slain, and the Spanish captains returned to their camps for that day.

The Mexicans no longer amenable to wise counsel.

Renewal of the attack on the part of the Mexicans.

The next day Cortes made an entry into the city, but did not attempt to penetrate beyond that part of it which he had already gained. On the contrary, approaching a barricade, he addressed some of the Mexican chiefs whom he knew (Cortes seems to have possessed in a high degree the royal

Cortes makes fresh overtures for peace.

accomplishment of remembering faces), and asked them why their King did not come to treat with him about peace? Finally, after some delay, it was agreed that on the next day the King should come to confer with Cortes in the market-place, and Cortes accordingly caused a lofty platform to be prepared for the interview.

Cortes, in vain, seeks a conference with the King of Mexico.

But when the time for the conference arrived, instead of the King, there came five of his principal lords, who made excuses for him, saying that he feared to appear before the Spanish General. Cortes did all that he could to win over these chiefs, giving them food,—by their ravenous way of devouring which, he perceived how pressing was their hunger. He also sent some food as a present for the King. The envoys did not, however, hold out any hope that Quauhtemotzin would attend a conference. Still Cortes persevered in sending assurances by them to the King, that he might come in safety; and so this conference ended.

Early on the ensuing morning the five chiefs repaired to the camp of Cortes, and said that their King had consented to meet him in the market-place; and Cortes, therefore, did not allow his

Indian allies to enter the city. But when he had gone himself to the appointed spot, and had waited several hours, and the King did not make his appearance, Cortes summoned in the allies, and the battle, or rather the slaughter, recommenced. On that day there were slain, or taken prisoners, no fewer than forty thousand Mexicans. So great were the cries and lamentations of the women and children, that there was no person (Cortes means no Spanish person) whose heart it did not break to hear them.* But the Spaniards could not prevent the slaughter, for they were only about nine hundred, and the allies more than one hundred and fifty thousand in number.

The slaughter renewed.

The final day of Mexico had come. The besieged retained now only a small corner of their city. Their King, instead of occupying one of those spacious palaces, in comparison with which the royal dwellings of the Old World were poor and mean, was obliged to take refuge in a boat. The order of the day, on the part of the Spaniards,

The last day of the siege.

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* "Y era tanta la grita, y lloro de los Niños, y Mugeres, que no habia Persona, á quien no quebrantasse el corazon."—LORENZANA, p. 296.

was as follows: Sandoval was to force his way with the brigantines into a deep part of the lake at the rear of those houses which were still held by the Mexicans.* Alvarado was to enter the market-place, but was not to commence his attack until Cortes should order him to do so by a signal agreed upon,—namely, the firing of a musket. Cortes himself was to bring up three heavy cannon, in order to be able to inflict severe loss upon the Mexicans without coming to close combat with them; for, with their vast numbers, they might suffocate the Spaniards, if the ranks were once intermingled.

All these arrangements having been made, and the approaches commenced, Cortes ascended to a terraced roof; and, from that height, addressed some of the principal men of the city, whom he knew, asking them why their King would not come, and suggesting, that as they were in such extremities that resistance was impossible, they

Cortes counsels the Mexicans to yield.

* According to Clavigero, this was a sort of harbour entirely surrounded with houses, where the vessels of the merchants used to land their goods when they came to the market of Tlaltelulco. See CLAVIGERO, *Storia Antica del Messico*, tom. III. lib. x. pp. 227-8.

should take such measures as would prevent all of them losing their lives. They should, therefore, summon their Prince to his presence, and have no fear. Two of them departed with this message, and shortly afterwards returned with the principal person in the city next after the King, who was called the *Cihuacuatl.* He informed Cortes that the King would by no means appear before him, preferring death: that he himself was sorry for this determination; but that Cortes must do what seemed good to him. Cortes replied that the Cihuacuatl might return to his men, and that he and they would do well to prepare themselves for battle. Meanwhile, an immense number of men, women, and children made their way out towards the Spaniards, hurrying in such a manner that they cast themselves into the water, and were suffocated amidst the multitude of dead bodies that already lay there.

The dead bodies were so numerous, that they were found afterwards lying in heaps in the streets; for thus the Mexicans had concealed their losses, not liking to throw the bodies into the water for fear of their being found by the brigantines. The number of those who died from the effects of hun-

The dead in Mexico.

ger, pestilence, and drinking salt water, amounted to more than fifty thousand. Ffty thousand souls! In studying wars, we acquire an almost flippant familiarity with great loss of life, and hardly recognize what it is. We have to think what a beautiful creature any man or woman is, for at least one period of his or her life, in the eyes of some other being; what a universe of hope is often contained in one unnoticed life; and that the meanest human being would be a large subject of study for the rest of mankind. We need, I say, to return to such homely considerations as the above, before we can fairly estimate the sufferings and loss to mankind which these little easy sentences,—"There perished ten thousand of the allies on this day," "By that ambuscade we cut off nineteen hundred of the enemy," "In this retreat, which was well executed, they did not lose more than five thousand men,"—give indication of. It was in vain that Cortes tried to prevent the slaughter of the miserable people, who now made their way out, by posting Spaniards in the streets through which they had to pass. His Indian allies slew fifteen thousand of them on that day.

Reading of wars we become accustomed to think little of slaughter.

Still the chiefs and warriors, hunger-stricken, encompassed, and overlooked* as they were, maintained their position upon some terraces and houses, and also in boats upon the water. Cortes ordered the cannon to be discharged; but neither did this induce them to lay down their arms. It was now evening, and the Spanish General commanded the musket to be fired, which was the signal for the general attack. The Mexican position was immediately forced, and its defenders driven into the water, where some of them surrendered. At the same moment the brigantines entered the harbour, ploughing through the fleet of Mexican canoes, which were instantly scattered in flight. A brigantine, commanded by a man named Garcia Holguin, pursued a particular canoe in which there appeared to be people of condition (*gente de manera*). His cross-bowmen in the prow were taking aim at those in the canoe, when a signal was made from it that the King was

The desperation of the besieged.

The last attack.

* "Ni les aprovechaba disimulacion, ni otra cosa, porque no viessemos su perdicion, y su flaqueza muy á clara."—LORENZANA, p. 299.

Capture of the King of Mexico.

there. The canoe was immediately captured, and the unfortunate Quauhtemotzin, together with the King of Tlacuba, was found in it; and both Kings were taken at once to Cortes. Cortes received the King of Mexico with courtesy. Quauhtemotzin advanced to him and said, "I have done all that on my part I was obliged to do, to defend myself and my people, until I came into this state; now you may do with me that which you please;" and so saying, he put his hand upon a poignard which Cortes wore, requesting that he would kill him with it. But Cortes spoke kindly to him, and bade him have no fear. The King being captured, all opposition ceased, and what remained of Mexico was taken.

This day, memorable in the annals of American history, was a Tuesday, the day of St. Hippolytus, the 13th of August, 1521. The siege, according to the computation of Cortes, who reckons that it began on the 30th of May, had lasted seventy-five days. We cannot give a better description of its fearful results than in the simple words of an eye-witness, who says, "It is true, and I swear 'Amen,' that all the lake and the houses and the barbacans were full of the

Duration of the siege.

bodies and heads of dead men,* so that I do not know how I may describe it. For, in the streets, and in the very courts of Tlaltelulco, there were no other things, and we could not walk except amongst the bodies and heads of dead Indians. I have read of the destruction of Jerusalem; but whether there was such a mortality in that I do not know." †

Thus fell the great city of Mexico. The nature of the conquest, the disposition of the conqueror, the extent of territory conquered, above all, the alliances by which the conquest was effected, all combined to produce a very different state of things from that under which

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* It is worthy of note that the Mexicans did not, even under the pressure of famine, devour their own people; they were, therefore, cannibals only when victory furnished them with the savoury morsel of a dead enemy.

† "Es verdad, y juro amen, que toda la laguna y casas, y barbacoas estavan llenas de cuerpos y carbeças de hombres muertos, que yo no sé de que manera lo escriva. Pues en las calles, y en los mismos patios del Tatelulco, no avia otras cosas, y no podiamos andar sino entre cuerpos y cabeças de Indios muertos. Yo he leido la destruicion de Jerusalem; mas si en ella huvo tanta mortandad como esta yo no lo sé."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 156.

the West India Islands were conquered and depopulated. Again, the Conquest of Mexico occurring at a period when the Home Government had acquired a little more insight into the management of colonies, also tended to make the fate of the nations now conquered very different from that of the islanders. The great extent and riches of New Spain enforced the attention of the Spanish government to that country, as its chief colony; and its conqueror, Cortes, became at once the principal figure in the New World. After this conquest, even the greater islands, such as Hispaniola and Cuba, lately the centres of government, were chiefly interesting as affording ample proof, on a small scale, of the immense misgovernment which they had undergone.

Nature and result of the conquest.

By that inevitable fortune which attaches itself to remarkable sites, Mexico, which had been the queen of cities in the Aztec period of dominion, will now, under the auspices of Cortes, when it has become Spanish Mexico, and when a beautiful cathedral has been placed upon the exact spot where stood the accursed temple of the god of war—when the exquisite gardens of Mon-

tezuma have given way to formal *alamedas*— when the vast expanse of waters shall, by the application of cunning art, have been withdrawn, leaving wide, dreary, arid spaces of waste land, —continue to be a ruling, queenlike city, and will still demand a large attention from the civilized world.

Mexico still a queen amongst cities.



# CHAPTER XIII.

*State of Mexico after the Conquest—Thanksgiving for the Victory—Mexico rebuilt and repeopled—Christoval de Tapia sent to supersede Cortes—Revolt of Panuco—Cortes inhabits Mexico—Memorial of Conquistadores to the Emperor—Arrival of Franciscans.*

Mexico not habitable.

NOTHING can well convey a surer indication of the sad state of Mexico, on the day of its conquest, than the fact that both the victors and the vanquished began to leave the city. Cortes and his soldiers returned to their camp, while, for three days and nights, the causeways were crowded by the departing Mexicans—yellow, flaccid, filthy, miserable beings, "whom it was grief to behold."* When the city

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* "Digo que en tres dias con sus noches iban todas tres calçadas llenas de Indios é Indias, y muchachos llenos de bote en bote, que nunca dexavan de salir, y tan

was deserted, Cortes sent persons in to view it. They found the houses full of dead bodies. The few wretched creatures who still here and there appeared, were those who, from extreme poverty, sickness, or indifference to life, were unwilling or unable to crawl out. In a great town there are always some abject persons to whom long despair and utter hardness of life make any lair seem welcome. The surface of the ground had been ploughed up, in order to get at the roots of the herbage. The bark of the trees had been eaten off; and not a drop of fresh water was to be found.

State of the city. Aug. 1521.

Mexico was taken on the 13th of August, 1521. For three days afterwards Cortes remained in his camp, and he then proceeded to the neighbouring city of Cuyoacan. His first care for the city of Mexico was to give orders that the aqueduct should be repaired. His first act on behalf of his own troops was to offer a thanksgiving for the victory. After the thanksgiving, Cortes held a great banquet in Cuyoacan. At this feast, which

The aqueduct to be repaired.

Thanksgiving for the victory.

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flacos, y suzios, é amarillos, é hediondos, que era lástima de los ver."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 156.

was followed by a dance, the soldiers, naturally excited by their long abstinence from anything like amusement, indulged in such freaks and excesses that Father Olmedo was greatly scandalized. Cortes being informed of this by Sandoval, suggested to the good monk that he should appoint a solemn procession, after which mass should be celebrated, and the Father might give the army a sermon, telling them "that they should not despoil the Indians of their goods or their daughters, nor quarrel amongst themselves, but conduct themselves like Catholic Christians, that so God might continue to favour them." This was accordingly done with all fitting solemnity.

A procession and a sermon.

The next thing was to dismiss the Indian allies, who were favoured with many gracious words and promises; and were enriched with cotton, gold, and various spoil—amongst which were portions of the bodies of their enemies salted.* They then departed joyfully to their own country.

The allies are dismissed.

The allies being dismissed, the Mexicans were

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* "Y aun llevaron hartas cargas de tasajos cecinados de Indios Mexicanos, que repartieron entre sus parientes y amigos, y como cosas de sus enemigos la comieron por fiestas."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 156.

ordered to make clean the streets of Mexico, and to return to the city in two months' time. A quarter of the town was appointed for their particular habitation, divided from that of the Spaniards by one of the great water-streets.

The Mexicans allowed to return to their city.

The next question concerned the spoil of Mexico. The conquerors were entirely disappointed by the smallness of the booty. Murmurs arose amongst the soldiery, and the meaner spirits began to suspect that their General concealed the spoil for his own benefit. Cortes, with a weakness that was unusual in him, consented, at the instance of the King's Treasurer, that Quauhtemotzin and his cousin, the King of Tlacuba, should be submitted to the torture, in order that they might be induced to discover where they had hid their treasures. During the cruel process, the King of Tlacuba, suffering agonies from the torture, looked beseechingly to his lord paramount to give him licence to tell what he knew, whereupon the gallant young King, himself in torment, treated his fellow sufferer with contempt, uttering these remarkable words—"Am I in any delight, or bath?" (*Estoi yo en algun deleite, ó baño?*) It appears, however, that one or other of the Kings

Smallness of the booty.

The Kings of Mexico and Tlacuba exposed to the torture.

confessed, that ten days before the capture of the city, the King of Mexico had ordered the pieces of artillery which he had taken from the Spaniards to be thrown into the lake, together with whatever gold, silver, precious stones, and jewels remained to him. It is remarkable that Cortes makes no mention of this torture of the captive Kings in his letter to the Emperor. Afterwards, when the transaction was made a matter of formal accusation against him, he defended himself by declaring that "he had done it at the request of Julian de Alderete, the King's Treasurer, and in order that the truth might appear, for all men said that he (Cortes) possessed the whole of the riches of Montezuma, and that the reason why he did not like to have Quauhtemotzin tortured, was for fear the fact should come out against himself of having kept back the spoil."*

The excuse of Cortes.

It may not be out of place to remind the reader what kind of man Cortes was at the time of the conquest of Mexico. One who knew him well,

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* Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 145. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. ii.

and whose descriptions of men are often as minute as if he was noting animals for sale, thus depicts Cortes. He was of good make and stature; well-proportioned and stalwart. The colour of his face inclined to pallor,* and his countenance was not very joyful. If his face had been longer, it would have been handsomer. His eyes, when he looked at you, had an amiable expression, otherwise, a haughty one. His beard was somewhat dark and thin, and so was his hair, which at that time was worn long. His chest was deep, and his shoulders finely formed. He was slender, with very little stomach; somewhat bow-legged, with well-turned thighs and ankles. He was a good horseman, and dexterous in the use of all arms, as well on foot as on horseback; and, above all, he had heart and soul, which are what is most to the purpose." †

Personal appearance of Cortes.

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* *Lit.* "ash-coloured,"—the *cinereus color* of the Romans.

† "Fue de buena estatura y cuerpo, y bien proporcionado, y membrudo, y la color de la cara tirava algo a cenicienta, é no mui alegre: y si tuviera el rostro mas largo, mejor le pareciera; los ojos en el mirar amorosos, por otra graves: las barbas tenia algo prietas, y pocas y ralas, y el cabello que en aquel tiempo se usava, era de la misma manera que las barbas, y tenia el pecho alto,

Patience of Cortes.

The same author dwells on the wonderful patience of Cortes. When very angry, there was a vein which swelled in his forehead, and another in his throat; but, however enraged, his words were always mild and decorous. He might indulge with his friends in such an expression as "Plague upon you" (*mal pese á vos*); but to the common soldiers, even when they said the rudest things to him, he merely replied, "Be silent, or go in God's name, and from henceforward have more care in what you say, or it will cost you dear, and I shall have to chastise you."

It appears that, in extreme cases of anger, he had a curious habit of throwing off his cloak; but even then he always kept himself from coarse and violent language*—a wise practice—for a furious gesture is readily forgiven (it is a mere

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y la espalda de buena manera, y era cenceño, y de poca barriga, y algo estevado, y las piernas y muslos bien sacados, y era buen ginete, y diestro de todas armas, ansí á pié, como á cavallo, y sabia mui bien mencarlas, y sobre todo coraçon, y ánimo, que es lo que haze al caso."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 203.

* "Y aun algunas vezes de mui enojado, arrojava una manta, y no dezia palabra fea, ni injuriosa á ningun Capitan, ni soldado."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 203.

sign of the passion of the speaker); not so a single hasty word, which may kindle all the fires of vanity in the person spoken to.

In his mode of argument the same composure was visible, and he was a master in the arts of persuasive rhetoric.

His mode of dress.

He was remarkably clean in his person and neat in his dress,* not delighting much in fine silks or velvets, or gorgeous ornaments. One chain only, of exquisite workmanship, he wore, with a medallion having an image of the Virgin on one side of it, and of St. John the Baptist on the other; he also wore a magnificent diamond ring.

His diet was of a simple kind; but, like most great men who work hard mentally, he was not a small eater.

He was very fond of games of chance, but good or ill-fortune in them never disturbed his equanimity, though it gave him opportunity for witty sayings.†

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* "Era Hombre limpísimo."—GOMARA, *Crónica de Nueva-España*, cap. 238. BARCIA, *Historiadores*, tom. ii.

† "Era mui aficionado á juegos de naipes é dados y quando jugava era mui afable en el juego, y dezia ciertos

He was very firm in his resolves. To those who have read the story of his life up to this time, it is scarcely necessary to mention this fact. But as no human virtue is without its corresponding drawback, it appears probable, from some words his chaplain lets fall, that Cortes occasionally carried his military resolve into civil life, and stood more upon his rights in legal matters than was always wise or prudent. He was not what may be called a profuse man, and was occasionally

His pertinacity.

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remoquetes, que suelen dezir los que juegan á los dados."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 203.

It is curious to note the same trait, of a fondness for games of chance, in Augustus Cæsar.—"It was considered a defiance of public opinion in Augustus to avow, almost without scruple, that he was accustomed to amuse himself in his family, or among his nearest associates, with games of chance for the most trifling ventures. He played, says Suetonius, openly and without disguise, even in his old age; nor did he confine himself to the genial month of December, but amused himself in this way any day of the year, whether on business or holiday. Familiar letters have been preserved, in which he recounts to Tiberius his bloodless contests at the supper table with Vinicius and Silius how they had played, for pastime, not for gain, sporting a single denarius upon each die, and sweeping the mode

even parsimonious, though immensely liberal as a lover or a friend, or when he thought to carry a purpose in war, or when he wished to gratify any particular fancy.*

His present grandeur of estate sat upon him with the easiness of a well-fitting robe that had long been worn, and he presented in no respect the appearance of a new-made man. He seemed rather to have come to some high fortune which had been awaiting him from his birth. Any one,

His dignified demeanour.

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stakes with the lucky throw of the Venus. 'We played every day through the five-day feast of Minerva, and kept the table warm. Your brother was most vociferous. Yet he lost but little after all. . . . . I lost for my part twenty pieces: but then I was generous, as usual, for had I insisted on all my winnings, or retained all I gave away, I should have gained fifty. But I like to be liberal, and I expect immortal honour for it.' To Julia he wrote: 'I make you a present of 250 denarii, the sum I gave to each of my guests to play at dice with at supper, or, if they pleased, at odd and even.'"—MERIVALE's *History of the Romans under the Empire*, vol. iv., chap. 37, p. 294.

* "Gastaba liberalísimamente en la Guerra, en Mugeres, por Amigos, í en antojos, mostrando escaseçà en algunas cosas, por donde le llaman Rio de Avenida."—GOMARA, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 238. BARCIA, *Historiadores*, tom. ii.

however, who has seen the singular dignity and grace of bearing which a Spanish peasant of the present day will manifest, can easily imagine that a descendant of a good family, with Pizarros and Altamiranos for immediate ancestors, would be very little disconcerted at being suddenly called to sit in the seat of judgment, to dispense rewards amongst obedient followers, and to sway an obsequious people, accustomed to be ruled by monarchs of a like imperious dignity and composure.*

Cortes as a man of business.

It is probable that Cortes, partially at least, fulfilled the requisites of that character, one of the rarest to be met with, and very much wanted at that time in the Indies—an admirable man of business. Rare, almost, as great poets,—rarer, perhaps, than veritable saints and martyrs,—are consummate men of business. A man, to be excellent in this way, must not only be variously gifted, but his gifts should be nicely proportioned to one another. He must have in a high degree

* For the descent of Cortes from illustrious ancestors, see Pizarro y Orellana, *Varones Ilustres de Nuevo Mundo; Cortes*, cap. i. Fr^co^. Diego de Sayas, *Anales de Aragon*, cap. i; and *Doc. Ined.*, tom. iv. p. 238.

that virtue which men have always found the least pleasant of virtues,—prudence. His prudence, however, will not be merely of a cautious and quiescent order, but that which, being ever actively engaged, is more fitly called discretion than prudence. Such a man must have an almost ignominious love of details, blended (and this is a rare combination) with a high power of imagination, enabling him to look along extended lines of possible action, and put these details in their right places. He requires a great knowledge of character, with that exquisite tact which feels unerringly the right moment when to act. A discreet rapidity must pervade all the movements of his thought and action. He must be singularly free from vanity, and is generally found to be an enthusiast, who has the art to conceal his enthusiasm.

Comparison of Cortes with other great men.

Cardinal Ximenes, King Ferdinand, Vasco Nuñez and Cortes are the four men who, in the history of the Indies, manifested the greatest powers of business. Las Casas, also, was a very able man, possessing many of the highest faculties for the conduct of affairs. But Cortes probably outshone the rest; and had the Indies been

his appanage, instead of a country unrighteously conquered by him, the administration of the Conquest would have been brought to the highest perfection that it could have reached at that period.

Amidst the infinite variety of human beings, not merely can no one man be found exactly like another, but no character can be superimposed upon another without large differences being at once discernible. Still there is often a vein of similarity amongst remarkable men which enables us to classify them as belonging to the same order. Cortes, for instance, was of the same order as Charles the Fifth and Augustus Cæsar. As a warrior he resembled Julius Cæsar; but as a statesman, I am not, I think, far wrong in likening him to Augustus, and to Charles the Fifth. Each of them had supreme self-possession: the bitterest misfortune never left them abject: the highest success found them composed to receive it. Each of them, though grave and dignified, was remarkable for affability with all kinds of men. All three were eminently tenacious of their resolves, but, at the same time, singularly amenable to reason—which is, perhaps, the first quality

in a ruler. Charles the Fifth was much the least cruel; but the cruelty of the others was never wanton, never capricious, never divorced from policy. All three had long memories, both of benefits and injuries. They were firm friends, and good masters to their subordinates, but could not be accused of favouritism. Cortes had, perhaps, more poetry in him than was to be found in either of the others. He had the warlike element which is discernible in Charles the Fifth, but was certainly a greater commander, and possessed more readiness and flexibility. Finally, Augustus Cæsar, Cortes, and Charles the Fifth were of that rare order of men in whom there is perpetual growth of character,—who go on learning,—to whom every blunder they commit is a fruitful lesson,—with whom there is less that is accidental than is to be observed in the rest of mankind,—and of whom humanity, with much to regret, cannot fail to be proud.

Cortes resembled Augustus Cæsar and Charles the Fifth.

The characters of great men may be more amply summed up, and more justly appreciated, at the close of their careers; but it seems well, occasionally, to look at them with all the light we can get, in the midst of their labours, and to

endeavour to see them in the guise in which they stood when they were face to face with other great men, and immersed in the contests of life.

Such as he has been described above was Cortes at the vigorous age of thirty-five, in the height of his unrivalled career, after one of the most memorable conquests made known to us in history.

Dealings of Cortes with other States in New Spain.

As was to be expected, ambassadors arrived at the Spanish Camp from neighbouring territories; and Cortes was enabled to give them a most significant illustration of his prowess, by taking them to behold the ruins of Mexico.* Their mode of describing events was pictorial; and here was a scene which, if well portrayed, needed little comment by words or hieroglyphics.

Occupation of Mexico by the Spaniards.

Cortes now prepared for the occupation of the site of Mexico by his own men, giving the usual quantities of land (*solares*) to those who wished to become residents. He then appointed the

* "Hícelos llevar á ver la destruccion y asolamiento de la Ciudad de Temixtitan, que de la ver, y de ver su fuerza, y fortaleza, por estar en el Agua, quedaron muy mas espantados."—Lorenzana, p. 308.

principal officers, the *Alcaldes* and *Regidores*. The building of the town was carried on with such rapidity, that in five months after its commencement, the new Mexico already gave promise of becoming, as the old had been, the principal and ruling city of those provinces. It is a remarkable fact that the Tezcucans were largely employed in this rebuilding, thus fulfilling, at least partially, a prophecy made by the Mexicans in the height of the war. The labour was great, food was very scarce, and numbers of the workmen died from the effects of famine. It is worthy of note that they brought the materials for building on their shoulders, or dragged them along by sheer force, and their only comfort during these great exertions seems to have been in working to the sound of music.*

Tezcucans employed.

Cortes did not accomplish all these great works

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* "El trabajo fué grande; cá traian acuestas, ó arrastrando, la Piedra, la Tierra, la Madera, Cal, Ladrillos, í todos los otros materiales. Pero era mucho de ver los Cantares, í Musica que tenian. El apellidar su Pueblo, í Señor, í el motejarse unos á otros."—GOMARA, *Crónica de la Nueva España*, cap. 162. BARCIA, *Historiadores*, tom. ii.

without the envy that belongs to such men and such deeds. The white walls of the palace of Cuyoacan were blackened each morning by malicious pasquinades in poetry and prose. Some said that the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the sea, had their courses, and if sometimes they went out of these courses, they nevertheless returned to their original state, and that so it would have to be with the ambition of Cortes. Others said that the soldiers should not call themselves the *Conquistadores* of New Spain, but the conquered of Cortes (*conquistados de Hernando Cortés*). Some said that he had taken his fifth as General, and a second as King; and others again that Velasquez had incurred all the expense, and Cortes reaped all the profit. Others wrote—

Pasquinades against Cortes.

> "Alas! how sad a soul I bear,
> Until I see what is my share."*

Cortes, who could use his pen as well as his sword, was not backward in replying to his ma-

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* "O que triste está el alma mia,
Hasta que la parte vea."

BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 157.

ligners; and he wittily wrote up "A white wall, the paper of fools" (*Pared blanca, papel de necios*). Next morning was found added, "and for truths." Finally, however, the practice of scribbling these things on the walls rose to such a height, that Cortes was obliged to exercise his authority in forbidding it altogether.

Another disagreeable episode in the affairs of Cortes was the arrival of an obscure man, named Christoval de Tapia, as Governor of New Spain. This appointment was the work of Fonseca, the Bishop of Burgos, who, whether he thwarted Las Casas, or, with much less injustice, condemned the proceedings of Cortes, was always in the wrong. Cortes himself made some show of obeying Tapia, but the friends of Cortes would not listen to this man's taking upon him so important a charge, and he was obliged to quit New Spain. This transaction is worth mentioning only as showing amidst what interruptions and vexations Cortes worked out his great achievements. It was not until three years and four months after Cortes had been elected Captain-General by his followers, in the council held at Vera Cruz, that he was appointed by the Court of Spain, Governor and

Arrival of Tapia to supersede Cortes. 1522.

Cortes appointed Governor

and Captain-General, Oct. 15, 1522.

Captain-General of New Spain, in a despatch dated at Valladolid the 15th of October, 1522.

Revolt of Panuco. 1522.

A further trouble to the administration of Cortes, which also is worth mentioning only as showing the nature of the difficulties he had to contend with, was the revolt of Panuco, a province to the north-east of Mexico. Cortes went to Panuco himself, and succeeded, after several encounters with the Indians, in subduing them and pacificating the province.

Soon after his return from this expedition Cortes despatched messengers to Spain to urge his own claims and those of the *Conquistadores;* who also on their own account sent a memorial to the Emperor.

Messengers sent by Cortes and his men to the Emperor, Dec. 20, 1522.

These messengers did not go empty-handed. They were commissioned to take to the Emperor eighty-eight thousand *pesos*, in gold bars, and the wardrobe of the late monarch of Mexico, Montezuma, which was rich with jewels, amongst them some pearls as large as hazel-nuts. These treasures never reached the Court of Spain, for they were captured by a French corsair, named Jean Florin. They probably, however, did as much good to the Emperor as if they had been spent

upon his armies, for they served to give the King of France some intimation of the wealth which the King of Spain was likely to draw from the Indies. The despatches had been intrusted to a man of the name of Alonso de Avila, who, though taken prisoner, contrived to have these valuable documents conveyed to some friends of Cortes in Spain, whence they were forwarded to his Majesty the Emperor, in Flanders. The exact time of Alonso de Avila's departure from Vera Cruz was the 20th of December, 1522.

Memorial of the *Conquistadores.*

The petition from the *Conquistadores* gave an account of the siege of Mexico; besought his Majesty to send to New Spain a bishop, and monks of all the religious Orders; explained their own conduct in not receiving Tapia; prayed that the government of New Spain might be conferred upon Cortes (the news of his appointment as Governor had not yet reached them); and asked, on their own account, that all the royal offices in the new colony might be given to them.

The above, however, are not the points in the memorial which are most curious, and which most require to be dwelt upon.

The world is so torn by differences of opinion,

that it is always very interesting, and somewhat delightful, to find any one subject upon which there is singular unanimity. Now there was something wherein the Spanish conquerors and colonists universally agreed. Biscayan, Estremaduran, Andalucian, Castillian—men who had various points of difference, and numberless provincial jealousies,—concurred in one request. As soon as any colony was in the least degree established in the New World, the colonists, almost in their first communication with their sovereign, were sure to entreat him to prohibit lawyers from coming out to them. The following brief notices will serve to indicate this remarkable unanimity.

One thing upon which the Spanish colonists agreed.

Cuba.

In 1516 the commissioners from Cuba to the Court succeeded in obtaining an order that lawyers should not be allowed to go there, because, since some had gone thither, lawsuits had arisen amongst the inhabitants.*

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* "Cuios Procuradores Antonio Velazquez, í Panfilo de Narvaez, haviendo pedido muchas cosas, al cabo alcançaron, que porque de haver pasado Letrados á Cuba, havian nacido Pleitos entre los Vecinos, que no pasasen mas, í que los que en ella estaban no abogasen."—HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. II. lib. ii. cap. 8.

The words of Vasco Nuñez from the Terra-firma, in 1513, are so remarkable, that they must be repeated here. "One thing I supplicate your Highness, for it is much to your service, and that is, that you would give orders, under a great penalty, that no bachelor of law, or of anything else, except medicine, should be allowed to come to these parts of the Terra-firma, for no bachelor comes here who is not a devil, and who does not lead the life of a devil; and not only are they bad themselves, but they also make and contrive a thousand lawsuits and iniquities. This regulation would be greatly for your Highness's service, for the land is new."*

The Terra-firma.

Vasco Nunez to King Ferdinand, Jan. 20, 1513.

The prejudice against lawyers was probably communicated by the early Spanish conquerors to the inhabitants of the conquered nations. In a memorable rebellion that took place in the Island of Hispaniola, which began in the year 1519, and was not finally quelled until the year 1533, predatory bands of fugitive Indians roamed about the island and harassed the Spaniards, who, from warriors, had become peaceful colonists and indus-

Hispaniola.

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* Navarrete, *Col.*, t. iii. p. 374.

trious growers of sugar. On one occasion, a young Spaniard, who had been captured by some of these revolters, and had been sentenced by them to lose his right hand, besought his captors to cut off the left hand instead, whereupon the Indian in charge of the execution replied with these convincing words:—"You are a lawyer. Be thankful that they do not slay you, and have patience." This anecdote was related by the sufferer himself to the historian Oviedo.*

Peru. In the agreement made by the Emperor with Pizarro, in 1529, respecting the discovery of Peru, it was determined that there should not be any lawyers in that country.†

Rio de la Plata. In 1541 the agreement made between the Emperor and Cabeça de Vaca contained a stipulation that there should be no lawyers or proctors in the province of La Plata, for experience had shown that, in lands newly-peopled,

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* "Yo le vi sin la mano . . . . él le rogò que no le cortassen la mano derecha, sino la ezquierda; é el Tamayo le dixo assí: 'Bachiller soys: agradesçed que no os matan é aved paçiençia.'"—Oviedo, *Hist. Gen. y Nat. de Indias*, lib. v. cap. 4.

† Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. iv. lib. vi. cap. 5.

many quarrels and lawsuits were promoted by them.*

And now, in this memorial to the Emperor, from Cortes and the other *Conquistadores* of Mexico, Bernal Diaz states—"We supplicated him that he should not send lawyers, for in entering the country they would throw it into confusion with their books; and there would be lawsuits and dissensions."† Mexico.

The King granted their request; and, in the regulations which he made for the colony in 1523, he declared that, "in order that they (the colonists) might perpetuate themselves and live in peace," no lawyers should be allowed to go to New Spain, or, if any should go, that they should not be allowed to advocate causes.‡

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* "Que no huviese Letrados, ni Procuradores, porque la experiencia havia mostrado, que en las Tierras nuevamente pobladas se seguian muchas diferencias, í Pleitos, por su causa."—HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. VII. lib. ii. cap. 8.

† "Le suplicámos que no embiasse Letrados, porque en entrando en la tierra, la pondrian en rebuelta con sus libros, é auria Pleitos, y dissensiones."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 169.

‡ "Para se perpetuar, í vivir en paz, se mandó, que

In 1527 the matter was reconsidered, and lawyers were allowed to go to New Spain, "as the affairs of that country were now of such magnitude that they (the lawyers) could not be dispensed with."

Difficulties about permitting lawyers to go to New Spain

In the following year, however, it appears that the colonists in New Spain again petitioned against the entry of lawyers, alleging the mischiefs they had caused. On the other hand, it was argued, there were people who could not defend their own causes. Finally, the Court of Spain empowered the authorities in Mexico to act as they might think best in the matter, adding this remarkable proviso,—that the advocates were to swear that if their clients had not the right on their side, they would not help them.*

In 1532, notice was taken of the fact that "by

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no se consintiese, ni diese lugar, que huviese Procuradores, ni Letrados, que abogasen; í si algunos fuesen á ella, no les permitiese abogar.—HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. III. lib. v. cap. 2.

* "Con tanto, que luego que començasen á abogar, í entender en los negocios, jurasen, que si sus Partes no tenian justicia, no les acudirian, ni pedirian términos, á fin de dilatar."—HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. IV. lib. iii. cap. 9.

the malice of men, and the introduction of so many lawyers and scriveners," the laudable custom of deciding suits by arbitration had fallen into desuetude; and the Spanish Government sought to bring back the state of things to that of the good old times.*

Settlement of suits by arbitration encouraged.

I have little doubt that lawyers and lawsuits flourished in New Spain, notwithstanding this last effort of the Court to restrain them. But the protest uniformly made by the colonists in every infant colony, and not merely made once, but persisted in, is a circumstance which the statesman will not pass by without heed. It would almost seem as if each colonist had undergone some dread experience of law, and felt as if that which might be borne in an old country, where

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* Por la malicia de los Hombres, é introducion de ntos Letrados, í Escrivanos, se havia perdido esta ıena, í loable costumbre; í no solo se havian dado á eitear, pero si como antes algunos Pleitos se compro-etian en Jueces Arbitros, iá no querian, como solian, sar por las sentencias de ellos; por lo qual se mandó, *e se executasen todas las arbitrarias, dadas conforme á Lei de Madrid, que establecieron los Reies Católicos en o de mil quatrocientos í quarenta í nueve.*"—HERRERA, *st. de las Indias*, dec. v. lib. ii. cap. 8.

Much law cannot be borne where the rest of life is very difficult.

other things have been worn into some forms of convenience, could not be endured when the rest of life was also severe and complicated. It was too much for a man who had to fight against new diseases, noxious animals, a trying climate, and surrounding barbarians, to be also molested by the cruel frivolities, the fatal forms, the needless precautions which soon become snares, the subtlety applied to verbiage which no skill can securely arrange and no dialectics can disentangle, and all the vast delay which belong to great lawsuits in highly-civilized communities. These things can only be borne when the rest of life is very smooth.

Prices fixed by law. Coinage adulterated.

The infant colony, though not as yet much disturbed by lawyers, was vexed by the difficulties which naturally beset such arduous undertakings as the settlement of men in new lands. The cost of everything was so extravagant that Cortes was obliged to appoint two persons to make a tariff of prices. The coinage, also, was tampered with,* which tampering, as was natural, only led to con-

* See "Bernal Diaz," cap. 157.

fusion, and did no good to those who had tried this worst resource of despots. Of all the new things that probably were introduced into Mexico at that time, water-mills were of the greatest advantage, especially to the Indian women.*

Amidst all his other occupations, Cortes did not forget his duty as a general, nor did he allow his Spaniards to enter the city of Mexico until he had built a citadel which commanded the city and secured the obedience of the native Mexicans.

Fortress built at Mexico.

That done, he entered Mexico. The state of the city at this early period cannot better be described than in the words of Cortes himself. 'Because I always desired that this city should

Cortes to the Emperor on the repeopling of Mexico.

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* "No apartemos al trigo del molino de agua. Quando se edificó el primero en México, hizieron los Españoles grandes fiestas; y los Indios á su semejança; con mayor demonstracion las Indias; porque daban principio á su descanso.

En esta ocasion fué quando dixo un Indio anciano, burlando de la invencion: Que hazia holgazanes á los hombres, í muy iguales; pues no se sabia quien era señor, ó criado. Y añadia: que los ignorantes nacieron para servir, y los sabios para mandar, y holgar."—Gil Gonzalez Davila, *Teatro Eclesiástico de la Primitiva Iglesia de las Indias Occidentales*, tom. i. p. 8. Madrid, 1649.

be rebuilt, on account of its grandeur and marvellous situation (*maravilloso assiento*), I laboured to bring back all the inhabitants, who, since the war, were scattered in many places. And, although I have always kept, and still keep, the King of the city a prisoner, I made a captain-general of his—whom I had captured during the war, and whom I knew from the time of Montezuma—take charge of the repeopling. And, in order that he might have more authority, I conferred upon him the same office which he had held in the time of his Lord, namely, that of *Cihuacuatl*, which means Lieutenant of the King. And to other principal persons,* whom I had also known before, I gave such other offices of government in the city as they had been accustomed to hold.

Re-appoints the *Cihuacuatl*.

* The respectful manner in which Cortes speaks of these Mexican officers is worthy of note. The only sure method of appreciating the merits of a conquered race is to observe the impression made by them on those who saw them first, and who were in a state of civilization not far distant from our own. The inhabitants of America, at the time of their conquest, are best understood by studying the writings of Las Casas, Columbus, Cortes, and Bernal Diaz, all of whom coincide in manifesting a great respect for the conquered races.

And to this *Cihuacuatl*, and to the rest, I gave lordships of lands, and of people, so that they might be maintained, though not to the same extent as heretofore, for fear of their rebellion; and I have always endeavoured to honour and favour them. They have worked in such a manner that there are already thirty thousand inhabitants in the city, and the same order that there used to be in their market-places and barterings. And I have given them such liberties and exemptions that every day the population is increasing; for they live much at their ease, and the workmen in the mechanical arts, of whom there are many, live by the daily wages which they gain amongst the Spaniards, as carpenters, masons, stone-cutters, silversmiths, and other artisans." He then proceeds to speak of the persons who live by fishing, which was a great branch of commerce there, and of the many agriculturalists. He begs the King to send seeds* and

Means of support for the Mexican officers.

30,000 inhabitants: order re-established.

Mexican mechanics paid by daily wages.

* Davila mentions that the first grain of corn which sprung up was sown by a servant of Cortes: it produced four hundred-fold.—"Házense grandes cosechas: dos vezes se coge trigo en el año. Y para que se vea la ventajança, y poderío de la tierra, Juan Garrido, criado de

Agriculture to be encouraged.

fruits from Spain, "as the natives of these parts are very fond of cultivating the earth and rearing plantations."† Finally, he concludes by telling the Emperor that in the Spanish part of the town there are many houses already built, and many begun; and that in five years' time it will be "the most noble and populous city in the world, and with very fine buildings." He adds that there are two large market-places, one in the Mexican, and the other in the Spanish quarter.

Prospects for Mexico.

It may seem ungracious, when recounting so many acts of great sagacity on the part of Cortes in the civil and military government of Mexico and its dependencies, to comment upon any error or omission. But there is one matter which pre-eminently demanded the attention of Cortes, and to which, as far as we know, he does not appear

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Hernando Cortés sembró en un huerto tres granos de trigo; perdióse el uno, y los dos dieron mas de quatrocientos granos, y poco á poco se cogió infinito trigo; y de lo que es de regadío se coge en mayor abundancia porque un grano produce docientos y mas."—Gil Gonzalez Davila, *Teatro Eclesiástico*, tom. i. p. 8.

† "Segun los Naturales de estas partes son Amigos de cultivar las Tierras, y de traher Arboledas."—Lorenzana, p. 376.

to have given his usual forecasting thought. For the good government of the nations he had conquered, for the advantageous settlement of the Spaniards themselves, and especially for the completion of the conquest with the least possible effusion of blood and waste of treasure, it was above all things necessary that the Indians and the Spaniards should understand one another. An interpreter was worth an army; and it is almost impossible to appreciate the nature of the conquest thoroughly, in all its horrors and in all its difficulties, without a constant recollection of the fact that opposing armies, that allies, that governors and their subjects, and that even masters and their servants had, for the most part, only the rudest means of communication. The Church, containing the learned men of the day, was sure to undertake, and did undertake, the remedy for this great evil. It may be said that Cortes waited for the advent of the Franciscans and Dominicans, whom he more than once petitioned the Court of Spain to send to the new country. But it must be owned that it would have completed the manifestation of his sagacity, if he had taken any steps at once for training some few Spaniards and some

The value of interpreters.

few Indians as interpreters. Geronimo de Aguilar died some time in the first three or four years after the taking of Mexico, and the Indian woman, Marina, the once-beloved of Cortes, from whom he derived the name by which he was generally known, *Malinche* (the Lord of Marina), was probably the only very good interpreter then left. After Cortes, she must be considered to have been the most important personage—the one who could least be spared—in New Spain.

Cortes on the subject of conversion.

An object which Cortes never lost sight of, was the conversion of the natives. In his report to the Emperor, dated the 15th of October, 1524, he says that, "as many times as I have written to your Sacred Majesty, I have told your Highness of the readiness which there is in some of the natives of these parts to receive our Holy Catholic Faith, and become Christians. And I have sent to supplicate your Imperial Majesty that you would have the goodness to provide religious persons, of good life and example, for that end." Cortes then proceeds to suggest that these should be monastic persons, and he speaks very plainly against bishops and other prelates. This is the passage which, I imagine, has led some ingenious

persons to believe that Cortes was inclined to the Protestant doctrines. To my mind, it is to be explained by his great desire for conversion, in which he wisely foresaw the religious Orders would be most useful. Perhaps, also, his dislike to Bishop Fonseca, who was at the head of the India Office in the mother country, may be traced in this general outbreak against bishops.

Cortes adverse to bishops.

It must have been with great satisfaction, that Cortes in this year (1524) had to welcome the arrival of Martin de Valencia and his Franciscan brethren.

Arrival of the Franciscans. 1524.

As there were many things connected with the Church in the New World which required settlement, a synod was immediately held. It consisted of five *clérigos*, nineteen *religiosos*, six *letrados*, and Cortes himself.* At this synod the difficult

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* "Y para que en todo se procediesse conforme á lo dispuesto por la Santa Madre Iglesia. Fray Martin de Valencia, como Legado del Santíssimo Papa, juntó un Synodo, que fué el primero que se celebró en el Nuevo Mundo, y en él se hallaron, 5 Clérigos, 19 Religiosos, 6 Letrados, y con ellos D. Fernando Cortes."—Gil Gonzalez Davila, *Teatro Eclesiástico*, tom. i. p. 20.

"Ultimamente habiendose ocurrido á la Cathedra de San Pedro, decidió el Señor Paulo III. por un Breve, en

question of polygamy was discussed; and it was arranged that the Indian husband might choose as his legal wife the one he liked best.

Few conquerors or statesmen can have transacted more important affairs than we see that Cortes had to deal with in the three years and two months that had now elapsed since the Conquest of Mexico.

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que expresamente manda, que quando uno viniesse á la Fé, se le dé la primera de las Mugeres que tenia en su Gentilidad; y si no supiesse declarar qual era la primera, se le dé la que el quisiesse."—F. A. LORENZANA, *Concilios Provinciales de Mexico*, Nota, p. 6. Mexico, 1769.



# CHAPTER XIV.

*The Expeditions sent out by Cortes to conquer and to colonize—The Expedition of Alvarado.*

CORTES was a man of insatiable activity. It might have been thought that, after the conquest of Mexico, the rebuilding and repeopling of the city would have sufficiently exhausted the energies even of that active man. But it was not so. He is chiefly known to the world by that conquest of Mexico, which, for its audacity, stands unrivalled in the annals of mankind; but he was subsequently employed in further conquests, which cost him far more labour and suffering, but have hardly added at all to his renown, so little time and thought can men spare for a thorough investigation of the lives and deeds of even their most remarkable fellow-men.

Almost in the next page of his third letter to the Emperor, after that in which he describes the siege and capture of Mexico, Cortes begins to inform His Majesty what steps he has taken for the discovery of that which he calls "the other Sea of the South."

News of the fall of Mexico.

After the last discharge of the cannon of Cortes had been made upon the helpless but unyielding crowd of Mexico, the news of the city's fall was not slow in reaching the adjacent territories.

How it sped.

Along the glad shores of the lakes, up the vast rocky basin in which those glistening waters and the gemlike cities were set, through all the defiles of the mountains, down the rivers, across the elevated plains of Mexico, from the eastern to the western sea, southwards to powerful Utatlan, and northwards to virgin California, sped the news.

The citizens of well-ordered states communed together upon the fate of the greatest of cities known to them. The travelling merchant told the tale, not unembellished, to his wondering auditors. The wandering huntsman, sitting at night by his watch-fire, held entranced the keen, bright eyes of other wanderers from scattered and

distant tribes, while he related to them new and unimagined feats of arms performed by bearded men and animals unknown in their prairies. All central America must soon have been aware that their "Babylon the Great had fallen."

And how did the listeners receive the astonishing news? With joy, regret, and apprehension: joy, that a ruthless enemy, to whose fell gods their young men and their maidens had been sacrificed, was now no more; regret, that they, the injured, had had no part in the misfortunes of the detested city; and apprehension, lest a worse thing should come upon them than even the power of the hateful Aztecs. A dead enemy is soon forgotten. The most gigantic fear leaves but little trace behind. A huge idol, once cast down from its pedestal, or a fallen minister of tyranny dragged ignominiously through the streets, is reviled, cursed, stamped upon to-day, and buried in oblivion to-morrow. Past terrors live again only in men's dreams. All that the neighbouring nations had suffered from the hideous Aztec gods would be forgotten in the new terror, which, like Aaron's rod, had devoured the puny enchantments of false magicians.

How the news was received in the neighbouring states.

The fall of Mexico must have produced an impression on the chiefs of the neighbouring states far greater than that which would have been felt throughout Germany at the defeat of an emperor by a foreign enemy; or throughout France, in the early days of French sovereignty over many provinces, at a similar defeat of their lord paramount, the French monarch; or throughout Christendom, at the capture by the Moslem of imperial Constantinople.

The conquest of the New World: its first aspect to the conquered.

Indeed, the defeat of the dwellers in the New World by those from the Old was not, in its first aspect, like the defeat of men by men; but it seemed as if that ancient giant race, the children of women by the sons of gods, not immersed by any deluge, but for ages safely dwelling amidst the mountains of the Caucasus, and hitherto lapped in a sublime indifference to human concerns, had now, obeying some wild, mysterious impulse, burst out upon the miserable descendants of mere men and women. These new beings might be tutelar divinities, might be destroying angels; but there was no doubt that they came forth, clothed in what seemed celestial panoply, "conquering and to conquer."

The Indian kings who were opposed to the Mexican dynasty, no less than those who were allied to it, shuddered at the success of these awful invaders from another sphere. The first potentate




who sent ambassadors to Cortes was the King of Mechoacan, a province about seventy leagues to the south-west of Mexico. From these ambassadors, Cortes, who had already heard something about this "Sea of the South," made further in-

Ambassadors from Mechoacan.

quiries. He found that it was to be reached through Mechoacan; and, accordingly, after causing his cavalry to manœuvre before these Mechoacan ambassadors, so as to impress them with a fitting sense of his power, and after making them some presents, he sent two Spaniards back with them on a journey of discovery. Hearing still more about this sea from other quarters, he sent in different directions two other parties of Spaniards to explore the way to the sea, and to take "possession" of it. He seems to have been fully aware of the importance of this discovery, for he says,—"I was very proud, for it appeared to me that, in discovering it, His Majesty would receive a great and signal service; since," he adds, "it was the decided opinion of all men who had any knowledge or experience in the navigation of the Indies, that when this sea was discovered, many islands would be found in it, abounding in gold, pearls, precious stones, and spices."* Cortes

Cortes sends to discover the Sea of the South.

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* "Estaba muy ufano, porque me parecia, que en la descubrir se hacia á Vuestra Magestad muy grande, y señalado servicio: especialmente, que todos los que tienen alguna ciencia, y experiencia en la Navegacion de las Indias, han tenido por muy cierto, que descubriendo por

thought, moreover, that many "secrets and wonderful things" were yet to be discovered there. From this faith in what was marvellous the first explorers and conquerors derived an ardour in pursuit, and an untiring love of novelty, which reminds one of the same qualities as they exist in the untravelled souls of little children.

Discovery of the Sea of the South. 1522.

As the sea was at no great distance, it was soon discovered by one or other of the parties sent out to explore; and formal possession was taken of it in the name of the Emperor, some time in the year 1522, nine years after the discovery of the same sea by Vasco Nuñez, about a thousand miles lower down.

Embassage from Tehuantepec.

Following the embassage from Mechoacan, there arrived at the camp of Cortes another set of envoys, from a people about a hundred leagues further south than Mechoacan, inhabiting a maritime country called Tehuantepec, which, it appears, was the territory where one of these parties of discovering Spaniards had come upon the Sea of the South. These Indians, as was usually the case,

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estas Partes la Mar del Sur, se habian de hallar muchas Islas ricas de Oro, y Perlas, y Piedras preciosas, y Especeria."—LORENZANA, p. 302.

were at war with their next neighbours, the inhabitants of a country called Tututepec. Immediately south of Tehuantepec lies the province of Soconusco, and south of that is Guatemala. Following the usual rule, these two last-named provinces were also at feud with one another. The great political doctrine of the balance of power was but beginning to be understood in Europe in those days, and was totally beyond the compass of Indian statesmanship. Accordingly, a similar series of events to those which had enabled Cortes to reach and to conquer Mexico was now to conduct his lieutenants into the southern provinces of Central America. These two provinces of Tututepec and Tehuantepec, which, from the similarity of their names, we may fairly conjecture to have been inhabited by tribes of the same race, were the first to give occasion to the stranger to enter armed into their territories; for Cortes, at the request of the envoys from Tehuantepec, despatched Pedro de Alvarado with a body of troops to conquer the unfriendly province of Tututepec. This province, however, does not seem to have received the lieutenant of Cortes with extreme hostility, or, at least, to have made any

Cortes sends Alvarado to Tututepec.

effectual resistance. After a few skirmishes, Pedro de Alvarado made his way into the town of Tututepec, where he was well received, and was furnished with provisions and presented with gold. The hostile Indians, however, of the next province, Tehuantepec, suggested that all this friendly demonstration was but feigned, and that an offer which the Cacique had made to the Spaniards, to lodge them in his own palace, was but a scheme to destroy them by setting their quarters on fire. Pedro de Alvarado believed this accusation, or affected to believe it, and seized upon the person of the Cacique, who, after giving much money to his captor, died in prison. That this seizure of the Cacique was thought unjust even by the Spaniards of that time is proved by the testimony of Bernal Diaz.* There is no novelty in this proceeding of Alvarado. Indeed, the dealings of the Spaniards with the

Alvarado's treatment of the Cacique of Tututepec.

* "Otros Españoles de fé, y de creer, dixeron que por sacalle mucho oro, é sin justicia. murió en las prisiones: ora sea lo uno, ó lo o, otr àquel Cacique dió á Pedro de Alvarado mas de triente mil pesos, y murió de enojo, y de la prision."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 161.

Indians seem, at this period of the Conquest, to be arranged according to a certain routine, in which the capture of the principal chief is seldom omitted; and it is worth while to notice the imprisonment of the Cacique of Tututepec merely because it is the first of a series of such proceedings on the part of Alvarado, who was the principal conqueror of Central America.

Alvarado's character.

His qualifications for command, as far as they appear in the page of history, were not of the highest order. He was grave, daring, restless, crafty, devout, but without any true policy. He was a great talker; but still, I should imagine, a man of considerable force, if not skill, in action, as he was largely trusted by Cortes.

Alvarado's personal appearance.

Alvarado's personal appearance was much in his favour. It is thus described by Bernal Diaz. "He had a fine and well-proportioned figure. His face and countenance were very lively, with a very amiable expression; and, from being so handsome, the Mexican Indians gave him the name of Tonatiuh, which means 'the Sun.' He was very agile, and a good horseman, and above all, a frank being, and a pleasant companion. In his dress he was very elegant, and wore rich

stuffs."* Alvarado was nearly the same age as Cortes, for Bernal Diaz says that he was about thirty-four years old when he came to New Spain. In his daring qualities and brilliant appearance he may be compared to Murat; and his relation to Cortes may not inaptly be compared with that of the King of Naples to the first Napoleon.

Alvarado founded a town in Tututepec, which he called Segura; but, on account of the heat of the climate and the swarms of insects, it was soon deserted. This expedition of Alvarado's took place in the year 1522.

Interview between the Spanish messengers and the Chief of Guatemala.

From the seat of his new conquest Pedro de Alvarado despatched two messengers to Guatemala (called by the Indians Quauhtemallán, the place of wood, or of decayed wood), who were to offer on the part of Cortes "his friendship and his religion" to the Chief of that province.

The chief asked these messengers whether they came from Malinché, whether they had made their journey by sea or by land, and whether they would speak the truth in all that they should say. They replied that they always did speak

* "Bernal Diaz," cap. 206.

the truth; that they had come by land; and that they were sent by Cortes, the invincible Captain of the Emperor of the World, a mortal man, and not a god, but one who came to show the Indians the way to immortality *

The Chief then asked, whether their Captain brought with him those great sea-monsters which had passed by that coast the previous year.† The messengers replied, "Yes, and even greater ones;" and one of them, who was a ship's carpenter, made a drawing of a *carack* with six masts, at which the Indians marvelled greatly. The Chief

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* "Embió á Quauhtemallán dos Españoles, que hablasen con el Señor, í le ofreciesen su amistad, í Religion el qual preguntó, *si eran de Malinxe* (que así llamaban á Cortés), *Dios caído del Cielo, de quien iá tenia noticia si venian por Mar, ó por Tierra, í si dirian verdad en todo lo que hablasen?* Ellos respondieron, *que siempre hablaban verdad, í que iban á pié por Tierra, í que eran de Cortés, Capitan invencible del Emperador del Mundo Hombre mortal, í no Dios; pero que venia á mostrar el camino de la inmortalidad.*"—Gomara, *Hist. de las Indias*, cap. 207. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. ii.

† The ships in question were those in the expedition of Gil Gonçalez Davila, who discovered Nicaragua.—Gomara, *de el descubrimiento de Nicaragua*, chap. 19 *Hist. de las Indias.* Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. ii.

then asked them if the Spaniards were not very valiant, and stronger than other men. They replied that, with the aid of God, whose sacred law they were publishing in those parts, and by means of certain animals on which they rode, they were accustomed to conquer. Then, to assist the imaginations of the Guatemalans, they painted a great horse, with a man in armour upon it. The Guatemalan Chief declared that he should like to be the friend of such men, and would give them fifty thousand warriors, in order that his men and theirs united might conquer some troublesome neighbours, who devastated his country. These neighbours were the Soconuscans. This kind of alliance with the Spaniards was the first thought always of the too-confiding Indians; and unluckily they had no Pilpay or Æsop to tell them the fable of the foolish horse who called in the assistance of man to conquer his enemy the stag, and who with that pernicious aid did conquer him, and has been much vexed and beridden by his associate ever since.

Interview between the Spanish messengers and the Chief of Guatemala.

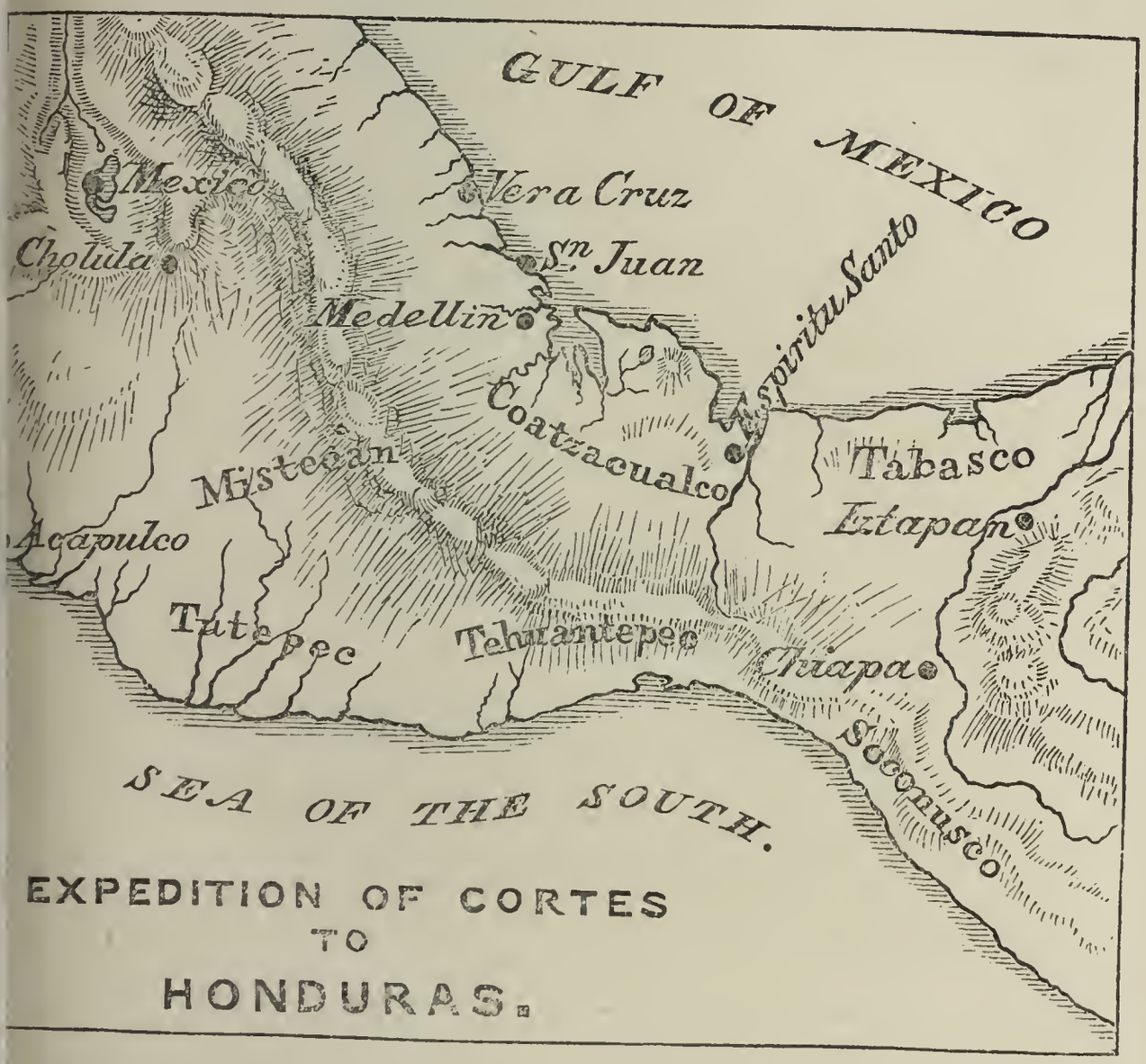
After this interview, the Spanish messengers were dismissed with magnificent presents of gold, jewels, and provisions, which, it is said, required

no fewer than five thousand men to carry them. Such was the first notice which the Spaniards received of Guatemala.

Embassage from Guatemala to Cortes.

Returning now to the camp of Cortes at Mexico, we find him informing the Emperor, in the year 1524, that from Utatlan and Guatemala an embassage of an hundred persons had come, offering themselves as vassals to the Spanish monarchy, whom he had received and dismissed with every mark of friendship. Meanwhile, however, this indefatigable commander had made friends with the Soconuscans, and had even begun ship-building on that part of the coast. The Guatemalans, when their embassage returned home, being assured of the friendship of Cortes, were only the more inclined on that account to carry war into the territories of their enemies the Soconuscans, and thus they did not fail to come into collision with the settlers sent out by Cortes. For this offence the Guatemalans apologized, but their excuses were not received. The words of Cortes to the Emperor are the following, and show the grounds of the beginning of the war:—"I have been informed by certain Spaniards, whom I have

in the province of Soconusco, how those cities, with their provinces (Utatlan and Guatemala), and another which is called Chiapa,* that is near them, do not maintain that good will which




EXPEDITION OF CORTES TO HONDURAS.

they formerly showed, but, on the contrary, it is said that they do injury to the towns of Soconusco, because they (the Soconuscans) are our friends.

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* This is the first mention of that district, afterwards to become renowned as the bishopric of Las Casas.

The said Christians also write to me that the Guatemalans have sent many messengers to exculpate themselves, saying that they did not do it, but others; and to ascertain the truth of this statement, I have sent Pedro de Alvarado, with eighty horsemen, and two hundred foot-soldiers, amongst whom were several cross-bowmen and arquebusiers, and four cannon, with much ammunition and powder.*

Pretext of Cortes for invading Guatemala

It does not need much knowledge of history, nor much experience of life, to foresee what kind of truth would be discovered by this formidable† armament; and it may be useful to notice the mode of interference of a powerful state in the affairs of smaller ones, when it comes before us in this clear and marked way, without any of the complications of nice and difficult diplomacy. This expedition, in which Pedro de Alvarado held the title of lieutenant-governor and captain-general, quitted Mexico on the 6th of December, 1523.

Alvarado commences his expedition against Guatemala, Dec. 1523.

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* "Lorenzana," p. 350.

† I say "formidable," because, though the numbers of the Spaniards were few, they were probably accompanied by a numerous body of their Indian allies. In such an expedition as this, there would be at least a thousand or fifteen hundred Mexican auxiliaries.

## CHAPTER XV.

*Other expeditions sent out by Cortes to conquer and to colonize—Expedition under Sandoval.*

THE expedition, which Cortes sent under the command of Alvarado, and which led to the conquest of Guatemala, was not by any means the only one which Cortes furnished and sent forth from Mexico. It would be useless to recount the doings of all these expeditions, but it will be desirable to follow the career of that one which was placed under the command of Sandoval. We may fairly conjecture that this commander was imbued with the spirit of his great friend and leader. The expedition was to colonize and conquer towards the sea of the North, and its chief settlements were made in, or near, the province now called Vera Cruz.

One of the objects of the expedition was to

punish the inhabitants of Tustepec, who, at the time of the retreat of Cortes from Mexico, had put to death sixty Spaniards and six Spanish ladies, who had belonged to the company of Narvaez. We have some interesting records of this expedition, because Bernal Diaz, the historian, accompanied Sandoval.

This garrulous historian answers a question which he is sure his readers will ask,—namely, how it was that the conquerors did not settle down in Mexico. He gives a sufficient answer by saying that—"We saw in the rent-books of Montezuma from what parts they brought him gold, and where he had mines and cacao and woollen stuffs; and when we saw, in the books, the provinces* from which they used to bring the tributes of gold for the great Montezuma, there we wished to go."

Cortes remonstrated with Bernal Diaz upon his leaving Mexico. "Upon my conscience, brother Bernal Diaz del Castillo, you are deluded. I wish you would stay with me. If, however, you have

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* The neighbourhood of Mexico did not furnish these valuable products.

made up your mind to go with your friend Sandoval, go, and good luck go with you, and I will always have a care for your interest; but I know well that you will repent of leaving me."*

Sandoval commenced his expedition in October or November, 1522. He seems to have been very merciful in the punishment which he inflicted for the massacre of the Spanish men and women who had accompanied Narvaez. He condemned to death the principal chief, but allowed all the rest to go free. Sandoval then sent an expedition to the Zapotecs, a mountain tribe of hardy warriors. These people were very well armed. Their lances were longer than those of the Spanish soldiery, having a blade six feet long, in which were set "razors of flint," (*con una braza de cuchilla de Navajas de pedernal*) much sharper than a Spanish sword. They had light shields, which protected the whole body, and bows, pikes, and slings. These warlike people were successful in repulsing one of Sandoval's lieutenants, but ultimately it

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* "Id en buena hora, é yo tendré siempre cuidado de lo que se os ofreciere, mas bien sé que os repentireis por me dexar."

appears that they submitted themselves to Sandoval of their own accord.

Sandoval then sent a message of peace to the inhabitants of the province of Xaltepec. It must not be supposed that when a Spanish commander sent a message of peace of this kind, it meant that the natives were to treat on equal terms with the Spaniards, and were to become allies. It meant that they were to allow themselves to be incorporated with the Crown of Spain, and to become dutiful vassals to their lord paramount, the Emperor. It also meant that they were to be apportioned to the Spaniards in *encomiendas*.

The Xaltepecs, however, thought it was better to belong to the Crown of Spain than to fight; and accordingly twenty of their chiefs presented themselves at the camp of Sandoval, bringing gold-dust in ten small tubes, besides "jewels of fine workmanship." The chiefs wore large cotton garments, which hung down to their feet, and were richly embroidered after the manner of a Moorish *bernous*. Sandoval received these chiefs most courteously, and gave them some glass beads. They were foolish enough to request his assistance against a neighbouring tribe; and he promised

that Malinché (Cortes was known by that name far and wide) would send a large body of *teules* to their assistance. Meanwhile Sandoval sent ten of his own companions, amongst whom was Bernal Diaz, to return with these chiefs to their own country. He pretended that he sent these men in order to see the passes, and to reconnoitre the country by which the Spaniards were to enter, when coming to assist these new allies of theirs. But his real motive was to ascertain where the gold was to be found. And when his emissaries did arrive in the province, their first care was to seek for this gold. They found it in the rivers, where, with the assistance of the natives, who, with something like the cradles used in modern times,* collected four tubes of gold dust. These Spaniards then returned to Sandoval.

Sandoval then divided the townships of that province amongst some of his followers; founded a town, which he named Medellin, in honour of the birthplace of Cortes, and moved on to the river Guacasualco. Here the natives submitted at once to Sandoval; and he gave *encomiendas* of

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* "Unas como hechuras de bateas."

these to his companions, in which division of the subdued country Bernal Diaz had his share.

It was while Sandoval was founding a town near the river Guacasualco that he heard of a Spanish vessel which had come into a river about sixty miles from the Guacasualco. Donna Catalina, the wife of Cortes, and other ladies were on board this vessel.

Sandoval went to pay his respects to the ladies, and brought them back to Guacasualco, whence he despatched a courier to Mexico, to inform Cortes of the arrival of Donna Catalina. Shortly afterwards Donna Catalina and the other ladies, accompanied by Sandoval and some of his captains, proceeded to Mexico.

Cortes gave orders that his wife should have a splendid reception. On her road to the capital the greatest honours were paid to her; and when she arrived in Mexico, tournaments were held to signalize her arrival. She did not, however, live long to enjoy the great state which surrounded her, for she died in less than three months after she had rejoined her husband.

Bernal Diaz reports that Cortes was greatly vexed when he heard of the arrival of his wife.

This is one of those scandalous reports, to which great men are peculiarly liable, and which do not admit of any refutation, simply because there is nothing tangible to refute. There is no evidence whatever to show that Cortes was displeased with his wife's arrival, and some evidence to the contrary. And there is no reason to believe that what he said to Las Casas did not apply to this time as well as to the time when he married her, namely, " that he was as well pleased with her as if she had been the daughter of a duchess."



## CHAPTER XVI.

*The Dealings of Cortes with the Natives, as regards apportioning them to his Spaniards.*

AT this juncture it may be told what course Cortes pursued in granting *encomiendas* and allowing his captains to make these grants in his name. At this time Cortes, no doubt, held that he had full power to give *encomiendas*. But in this year, and probably while Sandoval was, with plenary audacity, dividing provinces amongst his soldiers, a great junta, summoned by Charles V., was being held at Valladolid, to consider the whole question of Spanish supremacy in the Indies. This junta declared that "since God, our Lord, created the Indians free, we cannot command that they should be given in *encomienda*."* Las Casas, in an address to the

* "I la razon que la Real cédula expressa es, que

Emperor many years after, reminds His Majesty that Cortes had been commanded to revoke all that he had done in this matter; "but the sinner, for his own interest, did not like to do it, and Your Majesty thought always that it had been done, all people concealing the truth from Your Majesty."* It would have been very difficult, however, for Cortes to have revoked the orders he had already given on this subject; and, in a letter to the Emperor, dated the 15th of October, 1524, he says that he has made certain ordinances, of

The prohibition not enforced by Cortes.

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haziendo relacion de la dicha Junta, dize: *Pareció, que Nos, con buenas conciencias, pues Dios nuestro Señor crió los dichos Indios libres, í no sujetos, no podemos mandarlos encomendar, ni hazer repartimiento dellos á los Cristianos, í ansí es nuestra voluntad que se cumpla.*"—ANTONIO DE LEON, *Confirmaciones Reales*, parte i. cap. 1.

* "Y el pecador por su proprio interesse no lo quizo hazer; y vuestra Magestad pensó siempre que lo havia hecho, encubriendo todos á vuestra Magestad la verdad."—LAS CASAS, *Entre los Remedios que Don Fray Bartholome de Las Casas, Obispo de la Ciudad Real de Chiapa, ofirió por mandado del Emperador Rey nuestro señor, en los ayuntamientos que mandó hazer su Magestad de Prelados, y Letrados, y personas grandes en Valladolid el año de mil é quinientos y quarenta y dos, para reformacion de las Indias*, Razon xix. p. 205. Seville, 1552.

which he sends a copy to His Majesty. The copy has been lost, but the orders manifestly related to this subject of *encomiendas*. He intimates that the Spaniards are not very well satisfied with these orders, especially with one which prevented absenteeism, compelling them, to use the strong expression of Cortes, "to root themselves in the land."* He seems to have been aware that these ordinances rather contradicted what he had formerly said to the Emperor: for, after advising their confirmation, he adds, that for new events there are new opinions and counsels; "and, if in some of those things which I have said, or shall hereafter say to Your Majesty, it shall appear to you that I contradict some of my past opinions, let Your Excellency believe that a new state of things makes me give a different opinion."

Las Casas is quite wrong when he supposes that Cortes did not inform the Emperor that his

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* "De algunas de ellas los Españoles, que en estas partes residen, no estan muy satisfechos, en especial de aquellas, que los obligan á arraigarse en la Tierra, porque todos, ó los mas, tienen pensamientos de se haber con estas Tierras, como se han habido con las Islas, que antes se poblaron, que es esquilmarlas, y destruirlas, y despues dejarlas."—LORENZANA, p. 397.

Majesty's commands with regard to *encomiendas* and other matters connected with the welfare of the natives, had not been obeyed. A confidential letter from Cortes to the Emperor has recently been discovered. It is dated October 15th, 1524, and probably accompanied an official despatch from Cortes of the same date. In it Cortes gives admirable reasons why he does not obey, or even make known, the orders of his Majesty until the Emperor has had an opportunity of reconsidering them. This letter is eminently creditable to Cortes; and shows that he had carefully considered the question of how the natives were to be dealt with. The Emperor had given a very foolish order, namely, that the Spaniards should be allowed to have free converse with the Indians, by which it was meant that they might go away from their own *encomiendas* into Indian towns and villages, which were free from Spaniards. Charles the Fifth, with a most unusual want of sagacity on his part, wished for this free converse because it would lead to conversion. Now Cortes had not allowed his Spaniards to go into the Indian territories unless they had a license for so doing: in fact, he only allowed those to go whom

Why Cortes did not obey the Emperor.

he could trust. He tells the Emperor that as to busying themselves in converting the natives, these errant Spaniards will do nothing of the kind. They are, for the most part, people of low origin and little education. If they are allowed to go amongst the Indian villages, they will produce nothing but mischief and tyranny and discord. Experience in the islands has taught him how those islands have become depopulated; and he wishes to prevent a similar sad result in the lands that he has discovered and conquered.

As regards the *encomiendas*, he tells the Emperor that he cannot take them away, because the Spaniards will have nothing to live upon; and, practically, the conquest must be given up. These *encomiendas* should be looked upon, not as slavery, but as freedom for the Indians, when compared with what they endured under their former masters. Indeed, when the Indians behave ill, they are terrified into obedience by the threat of restoring them to their former masters.

The tenor of this letter is such that I do not doubt if Las Casas had read it, he would have looked upon Cortes rather as a saint than as a

sinner, at least as regards his aspirations for the welfare of the conquered Indians of Mexico.

The whole truth of the matter is, that the greatest part of the sufferings of the Indians in New Spain proceeded from the quarrels of the Spaniards amongst themselves, and also from the jealousy which naturally prevailed at the Spanish Court of any great conqueror such as Cortes. People were always insinuating into the Emperor's mind that Cortes was seeking a crown for himself. Nothing could be more unjust. Cortes was one of the most faithful servants the Emperor ever had. And, moreover, Cortes understood how great was the power of the Spanish Monarch. As His Majesty's representative, Cortes was everything. Without the authority and prestige which that representation gave him, he was nothing; and he knew it. If Cortes had, from the first, been created Viceroy of Mexico, that great province would have been the brightest jewel in the Spanish crown.

Charles the Fifth is hardly to be blamed for not having trusted Cortes sufficiently; for this great Monarch lived in such an atmosphere of intrigue that it was almost natural that he should

suspect everybody. Everywhere, throughout his European dominions, Charles had to dread deceit and conspiracy. That age was an age especially to be noted for diplomatic falsehood. The history of the relations between England, France and Spain at that period betray the existence of an almost inextricable mass of confusion, treachery and deceit. As you pursue the pages of this history, you can hardly guess, from page to page, what will be the next combination—whether it will be France and England against Spain, or France and Spain against England, or England and Spain against France.

The best points of Charles the Fifth's character, and indeed of the characters of his successors, are to be seen in their colonial administration. Indeed, their liberality and their anxiety for the welfare of their Indian subjects are sometimes surprising, when compared with the rest of their administration. But it was not given to them, certainly not to Charles the Fifth, who had to deal with the first conquerors in the Indies, to put implicit trust in the fidelity of those who had discovered and conquered great kingdoms in the Indies, and had added them to the Spanish Crown.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Christoval De Olid sent by Cortes to Honduras—his Rebellion—Cortes goes to Honduras to chastise Christoval de Olid—Dissensions in Mexico during his Absence—Execution of the Kings of Mexico and Tlacuba—Return of Cortes to Mexico—Ponce de Leon comes to take a Residencia of Cortes.*

THE next great enterprise which Cortes undertook is one that led to the most disastrous consequences, and is not, as it appears to me, marked by his accustomed sagacity. Even the shrewdest men, however, are liable to singular errors of judgment, from the temptation to continue to do something similar to that which they have once done well. In the management of an expedition through a hostile or dubious country, Cortes was transcendent. But a sagacity of another kind was more in demand now; and for some years he would have served his country

better as a statesman and a governor than as a soldier.

Christoval de Olid sent to Honduras, Jan. 1524.

Soon after the settlement of the affairs of Panuco, Cortes had despatched Christoval de Olid, one of those captains who had distinguished themselves in the siege of Mexico, to make a settlement in Honduras. This expedition started on the 11th of January, 1524. Christoval de Olid proved unfaithful to his trust, and gave undeniable signs of setting up an independent government for himself. Cortes was particularly indignant at the conduct of Olid; and his rage, shown by the swelling of the veins in his throat and the dilating of his nostrils, must have been closely watched and reported to the Council of the Indies at home, for we find that Peter Martyr, at Madrid, was well aware of it.* Cortes despatched an armament commanded by his cousin, Francisco

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* "Super Christofori Oliti, de quo lata mentio facta est in superioribus, inobservantia, Cortesium tanta rabies invasit, ut vivere ulterius nolle videretur Olito impunito, cum narium et venarum gutturis summo tumore præ ira, sæpe dedit de tanta animi perturbatione signa, neque a verbis id significantibus abstinuit."—PETER MARTYR, *De Orbe Novo*, dec. viii. cap. 10.

de las Casas, to reduce Olid to obedience; and afterwards sent, to support Las Casas, a vessel laden with arms and provisions, under a certain Pedro Gonzalez, a native of Truxillo, and, therefore, a fellow-townsman of Cortes. Having, however, received no good tidings from these captains, the General resolved to go himself, and bring Olid to a sense of his duty. The journey was a most perilous one. The settlement which Olid had made was not less than fifteen hundred miles from Mexico; and the King's officers (who had arrived at Mexico in the year 1524) naturally remonstrated with Cortes upon his undertaking such an expedition. It is probable that their remonstrance did not meet the considerations which induced Cortes to undertake this expedition. Almost any other man in the world, if employed as Cortes had been since the conquest of Mexico, would have supposed, and justly, that he had been leading a very active and energetic life. But Cortes felt that for some time he had been idle, and had done no new thing; and it now appeared to him that he "must engage in something."*

Cortes resolved to go to Honduras.

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* "Dada órden para en lo de Cristoval Dolid como á

What he calls his idleness had been caused by his having broken his arm; and though that injury was not healed, he would not allow it to hinder him from active enterprise any longer. Accordingly he determined to persevere with this expedition, and he made his preparations for quitting Mexico in the following manner. He appointed the Treasurer, Alonso de Estrada (a natural son of Ferdinand the Catholic), and the Contador Albornoz as his Lieutenants in the government. He named as Alcalde Mayor the Licentiate Zuazo, a great friend of the Clerigo Las Casas. He left Rodrigo de Paz, a cousin of his, as his Major-domo, and as Alguazil Mayor. To all of these officers, to his old friend and companion in the conquest, Father Olmedo, and to a Franciscan monk, named Toribio Motolinia, he left the charge of converting the natives, and of

Cortes provides for the government of Mexico during his absence.

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V. M. escribí, porque me pareció que ya habia mucho tiempo que mi persona estaba ociosa y no hacia cosa de nuevo de que V. M. sirviese a causa de la lesion de mi brazo, aunque no muy libre de ella, me pareció que debia de entender en algo."—*Relacion hecha al* Emperador Carlos V. *por* Hernan Cortés *sobre la expedicion de Honduras. De Temixtitan (Méjico) á 3 de Setiembre, de* 1526. *Documentos Inéditos*, tom. iv. p. 10.

preventing insurrections. In order to secure the fidelity of the natives, he carried with him the Kings of Mexico and Tlacuba, with other Mexican lords. The 12th of October, 1524, was the day on which Cortes quitted Mexico, and commenced this expedition.

Cortes quits Mexico, Oct. 12, 1524.

It was a very gallant company that Cortes took with him on this memorable expedition. At the head of the old *Conquistadores* was Gonzalo de Sandoval, the former Alguazil Mayor, and the constant companion-in-arms of Cortes. As spiritual advisers, the Spanish Commander had in his suite a friar of the Order of Mercy, named Juan de las Verillas, a *clérigo* whose name is not given, and two Flemish monks of the Franciscan Order, whom Bernal Diaz pronounces to have been good theologians.

The companions of Cortes.

The members of his own household, who accompanied Cortes, were his Master of the Household, his Chief Sewer (*maestresala*), his Vintner (*botillero*),* his Pantler, his Steward (*despensero*),

His household.

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* "*Botillero.* Potionum gelidarum conditor.'—*Diccionario por la Academia Española.* This would be an important officer in a hot country.

and his Chamberlain.* He took with him a physician and a surgeon; and his suite included several pages, two equerries, eight grooms, and two falconers. He had, moreover, several players on the clarionet, sackbut, and hautbois, a dancer on the tight-rope, and a juggler who made puppets dance. He also took mules and muleteers; and, lastly, which was by far the most important thing, a great herd of swine. As an interpreter he had only Doña Marina, for, as before stated, Geronimo de Aguilar was dead. Finally, Cortes took with him large quantities of gold and silver.

Many reasons of policy might be adduced for all this pomp. It might be said that such pomp was necessary in order to convey to the Mexicans an idea of his power and grandeur: that it was advisable, as tending to separate him a little from the familiarity of his old companions in arms: and, moreover, that it was a protection to him against sudden treachery or revolt. But the truth is, Cortes was fond of state, and always conducted himself as if he had been born to the use of it. He was a man in whose com-

Cortes liked state.

* See Bernal Diaz, cap, 174.

position there was much of melancholy, and who probably made no human being a partaker of his thoughts. Such men, it may be observed, are fond of numerous retinues and large households. They like to have many people about them who fill up life and give a movement to it, and in whom they need not confide. Like other great men and eminent soldiers, amongst whom Napoleon, Julius Cæsar, and Wallenstein might be numbered, Cortes was magnificent, without being in the least degree luxurious; and the service which such men require from those around them is such as not to minister to their indolence, but rather to increase their sphere of action.

What kind of friend Cortes was leaving behind him at Mexico in Albornoz, may be discerned from a letter which Peter Martyr sent to the Pope, and which forms a sort of postscript to his "Eighth Decade," bearing date the 20th of October, 1525. Peter Martyr was, fortunately for the interests of history, a member of the Council of the Indies; and, writing about this date, he mentions that letters in cipher have come from Albornoz, describing "the craft, the burning avarice,

Albornoz an enemy of Cortes.

and the scarcely concealed usurpation " of Cortes. These letters, too, came at a time when, as the historian justly remarks, suspicions were not wanting of the fidelity of Cortes. The judicious old man adds, " Time will judge whether these accusations are true, or whether they are fabricated in order to gain favour."* Certainly, Cortes by no means escaped the subsequent difficulties which such unrivalled transactions as his are sure to breed. His early career, not by any means unclouded, gave weight at Court to any accusations that might be brought against him from New Spain

Besides the official persons to whom Cortes had given charge of the government during his

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* " Arcanæ vero ac particulares litteræ a solo computatore Albornozio, regio a secretis, veniunt sub ignotis caracteribus, quos Zifras nuncupat usus, discedenti Albornozio assignatos, quod ab eo tempore suspitione de animo Cortesii non careremus. Hæ contra Cortesii vafros astus et ardentem avariciam ac semiapertam tyrannidem formatæ sunt, an ex vero, an, uti sæpe solet, captandæ gratiæ causa hæc fabricata sint, judicabit aliquando tempus; delecti namque jam sunt viri graves ad hæc inquirenda mittendi. Quando latentia nunc hæc patefient, beatitudini tuæ significabuntur."—Peter Martyr, *De Orbe Novo*, dec. viii. cap. 10.

absence, there were two other officers of the King, powerful personages, namely the Factor, Gonçalo de Salaçar, and the Veedor (Inspector), Peralmindez Chirinos, and these men were much disgusted at being left in a kind of subjection to those whom they considered colleagues. Finding, however, that they could not dissuade Cortes from his enterprise, they begged permission to accompany him as far as Espíritu Santo* in Coatzacualco, a new town of the Spaniards, which was situated a hundred and ten leagues south-east from Mexico. On the road the Factor, as he

The Factor and the Veedor discontented.

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* This town had been founded by Sandoval, when he was sent to reduce several provinces south-east of Mexico which, according to the language of Cortes, had rebelled, and which had all been under the government of a woman. Cortes thus relates the founding of this town.—"Y él tubo tan buen órden, que con saltear una noche un Pueblo, donde prendió una Señora, á quien todos en aquellas partes obedecian, se apaciguó, porque ella embió á llamar todos los Señores, y les mandó, que obedeciessen lo que se les quisiesse mandar en nombre de Vuestra Magestad, porque ella assí lo habia de hacer: é assí llegaron hasta el dicho Rio, y á quatro leguas de la boca de él, que sale á la Mar, porque mas cerca no se halló asiento, se pobló, y fundó una Villa, á la qual se puso nombre el Espíritu Santo."—LORENZANA, p. 331.

travelled next to Cortes, did not fail to renew his remonstrances in scraps of song, as the manner of that age was:—

"Ay tio bolvámonos,
Ay tio bolvámonos;" *

to which Cortes was wont to sing in reply—

"Adelante mi sobrino,
Adelante mi sobrino,
Y no creais en agüeros
Que será lo que Dios quisiere
Adelante mi sobrino." †

Estrada and Albornoz quarrel.

Unfortunately, before Cortes and his army reached Espíritu Santo, a feud broke out at Mexico between Alonso de Estrada and Rodrigo Albornoz about the appointment of some minor officer; and the feud rose to such a height that swords were drawn, or were about to be drawn. Information of this quarrel soon reached the ears of Cortes, and

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* Alas, uncle, let us return,
Alas, uncle, let us return.

† Onwards, my nephew,
Onwards, my nephew,
Put no trust in auguries,
That which God pleases, will be,
Onwards, my nephew.
—Bernal Diaz, cap. 174.

it naturally added great weight to the Factor's remonstrances. He was a false, flattering, obsequious man. Cortes, no doubt, believed him




be a true friend; and, in an evil hour, drew p a despatch, by which he authorized the Factor nd the Veedor to be joined in the same authority ith the Treasurer and the Contador, and even supersede these two last-named officers, in case ey should not have composed their differences.

Cortes gives the Factor and the Veedor authority.

From the known astuteness of Cortes, men found it difficult to suppose that any action o his was without some subtle motive; and ima gined that, as he knew that all the King's officer had written home unfavourably about him, i would tend to damage their representations if i were found that they could not agree amongs themselves.* Cortes, however, was too fond o good government to adopt such a scheme as this and his plan of associating the Factor and th Veedor with the other two King's officers does no appear to have been an unreasonable one. Th only blame to which Cortes seems liable in th matter, is in the absence of his usual sharp discern ment of men's characters, and that he failed t perceive what a flattering rogue † the Factor wa

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* "Sabia, que todos, de conformidad, avian escrito Rei, informándole mal de su Persona, y le parecia, que entre ellos avia discordias, se deshacia todo el mal, q de él avian escrito; pero nunca pensó, que las diferenci llegaran á tanto extremo."—TÓRQUEMADA, *Monarquía Ind ana*, lib. v. cap. 2. See also HERRERA, dec. III. lib. vi. cap.

† Bernal Diaz gives, in few words, a ludicrous accou of the parting, and especially of the almost sobbi adieus of the Factor.—"Pero dexemos esto, y diré, q quando se despidieron el Factor, y el Veedor de Cort para se bolver á México, con quantos cumplimientos.

Armed with these powers, the Factor and the Veedor went back to Mexico, and, though the others had come to an agreement, the newly-arrived lieutenants sought to gain the whole power for themselves. From this dispute arose a state of confusion which lasted during nearly the entire period that Cortes was absent. It will be needless for me to recount the various intrigues, conspiracies, and surprizes which occupied the colonists of Mexico for the twenty months that Cortes was absent during his perilous journey in Honduras. The result of them was this. Rodigo de Paz, the cousin and major-domo of Cortes, was first imprisoned; then tortured, in order to make him discover treasure; and finally hanged. The house of Cortes, in Mexico, was plundered; and the land about it ploughed and dug up. Suazo, who was a just man, was deprived of his land of office and banished to Medellin; and the Factor rose to supreme power, which he exercised the most shameful manner.* A report, which

The Factor and the Veedor seek to usurp the whole authority.

Utter confusion in the Government of Mexico. 1524 to 1526.

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raços, y tenia el Factor una manera como de sollozos, e parecia que queria llorar al despedirse."—BERNAL AZ, cap. 174.

* As an instance of the sinister dealings of the

Report in Mexico of the death of Cortes.

was very credible, of the deaths of Cortes and all his companions, gave strength to the machinations of the Factor. Funeral services were performed for Cortes at Mexico, and his effects were deposited in the hands of an officer whose duty it was to take charge of the property of defunct persons.* So indignant was the Factor at any disbelief in the death of Cortes (a convenient witness had seen the spirits of Cortes and Sandoval, in flames near the site of the great temple of Huitzilopochtli), that he ordered Juana de Marsilla, the wife of Alonso Valiente, to be publicly whipped through the streets for a witch, because she obstinately declared that Cortes and her husband (his secretary) were alive, and that she would not marry again.

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Factor it may be observed that he endeavoured, as many wicked civil governors have done since, to bring his enemy within the grasp of the Inquisition; but Martin de Valencia declared that Rodrigo de Paz had confessed, was absolved, and was a good Christian.—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. v. cap. 2.

* "Se apoderaron de todos los bienes de Cortés, afirmando, que era muerto, y los depositaren en el Tenedor de bienes de Difuntos."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. v. cap. 2.

It was during this expedition to Honduras, and while Cortes was at Guasualco, that a very remarkable incident took place, in which the great interpretess, Donna Marina, played the principal part.

Previously, however, to describing this incident, I must mention the fact that Donna Marina had been married to a Spanish cavalier, named Juan de Xaramillo. For once, Gomara, who was the chaplain of Cortes, scandalizes his master, for he says that Juan was drunk when he married, and that Cortes was blamed for having permitted the marriage. He also says that both husband and wife deserted Cortes.

The whole of this story is absolutely false. It probably was a portion of the history which the good Chaplain did not read out to his patron for correction.

It will perhaps be remembered by the reader how it was that Donna Marina came into the possession of Cortes. Her mother was the wife of the chief of Painala, a Mexican province. Her first husband died, and she then married a young man, by whom she had a son. The father and mother, being desirous of leaving their kingdom to the

boy (it is evident that there was no such thing as a salique law in Painala), resolved to get rid of Marina. They accordingly pretended that she had died; showed to the people the body of a girl of the same age, the daughter of one of their slaves; and by night gave poor Marina to some Indians of Xicalango. By them she was sold to the Tabascans; and they presented her, with nineteen other young women, to Cortes.

I shall now narrate the incident relating to Marina, which occurred in this expedition to Honduras. While Cortes was at Guasualco, he summoned all the neighbouring chiefs, in order to address to them a discourse upon religion. Among these chiefs came the wicked mother of Donna Marina, who had been baptized, and had taken the name of Martha. With her came the brother, by the mother's side, of Marina, who had also been baptized, and had taken the name of Lazarus. His father, the second husband of Martha, was dead. The daughter made herself known to her mother, and the mother could not but acknowledge her. The likeness between mother and daughter was very striking. Bernal Diaz, who had an *encomienda* of Indians in Guasualco, was acquainted with Marina's mother; and he testifies

to this great likeness. The wicked mother and the usurping son naturally thought that they had been sent for, in order to be slain, and that Marina would be reinstated in her principality. They began to weep and to lament; but, when Marina saw their grief, she consoled them, and bade them have no fear, for she told them that when they had made her over to the men of Xicalango they did not know what they were doing; and she forgave them. Also she gave them many jewels, and much fine linen, and bade them return to their own people. And then she said that "God had been very gracious to her, in making her abandon the worship of idols and become a Christian; also that it had been given to her to have a child by her lord and master Cortes, and to be married to a Spaniard of rank, such as was her husband Juan de Xaramillo. "If," she said, "they could have made her the Chieftainess of as many provinces as there were in Mexico, the only use that she could make of this power would be to do more service to her husband and to Cortes."

Bernal Diaz says, that in very certainty he heard all this, and he adds these words, "I swear to it, Amen."

Moreover it seems to him that the story is like that thing which happened in Egypt to Joseph, and those brethren of his, who came into his power when there was that famine in the land.*

Returning to the affairs of Mexico, there is no doubt in my mind that there was a genuine belief that the expedition of Cortes to Honduras had been most disastrous. Ill news apparently does not require human feet to convey it, but has wings of its own. Though it was not true that Cortes and his Spanish companions had perished in their journey to Honduras, tidings might have come from the camp, which, if they had reached Mexico, would have justified the worst apprehensions as to the fate of Cortes. The difficulties of march and of transport—the severe privations arising from want of food and of fodder—and the sufferings of all kinds which Cortes and his army had to undergo, rendered lax the military disci-

Distress of the journey to Honduras.

* The singular brevity with which this good soldier writes is well illustrated by the four words "when that of the corn," (quando lo del trigo) which is his way of summing up the events which brought the brethren of Joseph into Egypt.

pline among them. Even the Commander himself at times found the greatest difficulty in appeasing his hunger. Then, too, the nature of the ground traversed was sometimes such as to defy

Difficulties of the march.




he maintenance of discipline. In the road, for nstance, between Iztapan and Zaguatapan the Spaniards found themselves in a wood of such extent and thickness that, as Cortes expresses t, nothing was seen except the spot where they

placed their feet on the ground, and the aperture above them through which the heavens were discernible. Even when some of his men climbed the trees, their extent of vision was limited to a stone's throw.* The Indian guides were quite at fault, and the whole army would probably have perished, but for the use that was made of the mariner's compass. Such was the country, abounding in dense forests, wide morasses, broad, unfordable rivers,† and not without stony mountains, over which Cortes had to lead his motley band of Spanish horsemen, musicians, jugglers, and Mexican attendants.

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* "Este monte era muy bravo y espantoso, por el cual anduve dos dias abriendo camino por donde señalaban aquellas guias, hasta tanto que dijeron que iban desatinados, que no sabian á donde iban; y era la montaña de tal calidad que no se via otra cosa sino donde poniamos los piés en el suelo, ó mirando arriba, la claridad del cielo: tanta era la espesura y alteza de los árboles, que aunque se subian en algunos, no podian descubrir un tiro de piedra."—*Documentos Inéditos*, tom. iv. p. 34.

† The bridges that were thrown over these formidable marshes and rivers, which chiefly owed their construction to the skill of the Mexican artificers, remained for years; and when these provinces were at peace, the admiring traveller was wont to exclaim, "These are the bridges of Cortes."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 178.

To estimate the intense sufferings which the generals as well as the common soldiers underwent in this expedition to Honduras, recourse must be had to the pages of the narrative of the common soldier who took part in it, and who dwells upon details which are not mentioned by his chief. Bernal Diaz, when describing the construction of a certain bridge across a river, says that the army had nothing to eat for three days but grass, and a root called *quecuenque*, which burnt their lips and tongues. No crusader cursed with more depth of bitterness the hermit, or the baron, or the prince, who had induced or compelled him to enter upon his foolish crusade, than did the soldiers of Cortes curse their unfortunate commander. His own immediate attendants died first; his buffoon, a courtly officer so dear to a man of melancholy nature such as Cortes, was one of the earliest that perished from fatigue and hunger. Then the musicians fell ill, the players upon the sackbut, the clarion, and the dulcimer. One vigorous musician, however, continued to play upon his instrument; but the soldiers would not listen to him, for they said that it was like the howling of jackals; and that what they

Sufferings from hunger of the Expedition.

wanted was maize to eat, and not music to listen to.

In the hope that some friendly aid might come after them, the soldiers cut crosses on the gigantic Ceyba trees, and fastened bits of paper, with this inscription, "Cortes passed this way on such and such a day."

The Mexican chiefs became cannibals. They seized upon the natives where they could find them, and, baking their bodies between heated stones, devoured them. This abominable practice was immediately put a stop to by Cortes, when the fact came to his knowledge.

Bernal Diaz was sent out as the captain of a foraging party. He was fortunate enough to bring back one hundred and thirty loads of maize, eighty fowls, some honey, and some beans. But as he returned to the camp at evening, the soldiers intercepted his convoy and devoured all the provisions, crying out, as they carried off the provision, "This is for Cortes." It was in vain that the officers of the General's household endeavoured to secure some of this food for their master: the common soldiers exclaimed, "You and Cortes had swine for yourselves; and you saw us dying of hunger, and you gave us nothing."

Cortes was enraged when he heard of these things, and blamed Bernal Diaz, who replied that Cortes ought to have sent out guards to protect the convoy. Then Cortes resorted to flattery and persuasion instead of reprimand, and said, "Oh, Señor brother Bernal Diaz del Castello, if you have left any of the food secreted by the road, for the love of me, give me some of it. I am sure you must have kept some for yourself and your friend Sandoval." And then Sandoval, who was with Cortes, said, "I swear I have not even a handful of maize to roast for my supper." In reply, Bernal Diaz admitted that, in a neighbouring village, the inhabitants had secreted for him some maize, and some fowls, and some honey; and he proposed that "at the fourth hour of the second sleep," when the whole camp would be buried in repose, they should go and get these provisions. Then Sandoval's heart was joyful, and he embraced Bernal Diaz; but Cortes, whose duty to religion was never far from his mind, asked if the monks, who had accompanied the expedition, had anything to eat. To which Bernal Diaz replied, that God took greater care of them than he (Cortes) did, for all the soldiers gave to them

part of what they had seized upon this evening, and the monks would not die of hunger.

It is very significant of the state of misery and insubordination which prevailed in the camp, that Sandoval went himself with Bernal Diaz, in the fourth hour of the second sleep, to get his share of these provisions; for, of the many soldiers who were especially attached to his command, there was not one who could be trusted to bring back food to his starving commander.

It was not likely that the prisoners of Cortes —including the captive monarchs of Mexico, Tlacuba and Tezcuco—could fail to observe the inevitable relaxation of discipline which was caused by the sufferings of the army, and to commune with themselves and with each other upon the advantage they might derive from it. They accordingly conspired. Their plan was, after destroying those Spaniards who were with them, to raise the standard of revolt, and march for Mexico. The time was very favourable for their design. Part of the Spanish troops were with Pedro de Alvarado in Guatemala; another part in Honduras with Christoval de Olid, and with the Captains who had gone to subdue that rebel. Other Spaniards,

The Mexican chiefs conspire.

again, had gone into the province of Mechoacan, where some gold mines, according to report, had been discovered. Mexico itself was comparatively defenceless; and at no period since the conquest would a revolt have been more formidable. The Mexican troops who accompanied Cortes amounted to three thousand. Death was imminent from starvation: why should they not die to save their monarch and to reinstate their country in its former greatness?

Absence of Spanish troops from Mexico.

The conspiracy was betrayed to Cortes by Mexicatzincatl, the same man whom Cortes had set over the work of constructing and governing the Indian quarters of Mexico. This man probably understood better than his countrymen the solid basis upon which the power of Cortes rested, and the speed with which a common danger would compel the Spaniards to resume their accustomed wariness and discipline. The traitor showed to Cortes a paper whereon were painted the faces and names of the Mexican Lords and Princes who were concerned in the conspiracy. The Spanish Commander immediately seized upon them separately, and examined them one by one, telling each that the others had confessed the truth.

Conspiracy betrayed to Cortes.

Cortes seizes the conspirators.




MEXICO, GUATEMALA,

AND THE

ADJOINING PROVINCES.

According to Bernal Diaz, and also according to an ancient Tezcucan history,* it appears as if the King of Mexico did not confess to more than being aware of the conspiracy, and declared that he had refused to entertain it. This may be dubious; but, at any rate, the cruel practical wisdom of Cortes would make but little difference between a conspiracy suggested by the monarch himself or by others on his behalf. The result would have been the same. Indeed, Cortes maintained that merely to have listened to this treason was a thing deserving of death.† And Cortes saw that the sure way of putting an immediate stop to such conspiracies was to make a great example of the principal personages concerned. Accordingly, the Kings of Mexico and Tlacuba were condemned to death.

Speech of Quatemotzin.

When led to execution, the King of Mexico exclaimed, "O, Malinché, I have long known the falseness of your words, and have foreseen that you would give me that death which,

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* Referred to by Torquemada.

† Los otros solte porque no parecía que tenian mas culpa que de haberlo oido, aunque aquello bastaba para merecer la muerte.

alas! I did not give myself, when I surrendered to you in my city of Mexico. Wherefore do you slay me without justice? May God demand it of you."

The King of Tlacuba said that he looked upon his death as welcome, since he was to die with




The Kings of Mexico and Tlacuba put to death. 1525.

his Lord, the King of Mexico. After confession and absolution, the two Kings were hanged upon a ceyba tree in Izzancanac, in the province of Acalán, on one of the carnival days before Shrovetide, in the year 1525. Thus ended the great

Mexican dynasty—itself a thing compacted by so much blood and toil and suffering of countless human beings. The days of deposed monarchs—victims alike to the zeal of their friends and the suspicions of their captors—are mostly very brief; and perhaps it is surprising that the King of Mexico should have survived so long as four years the conquest of his capital, and have been treated during the greater part of that time with favour and honour.

Some writers have supposed that Cortes was weary of his captives, and wished to destroy them, and that the charge of conspiracy was fictitious. Such assertions betray a total ignorance of the character of this great Spaniard. Astute men seldom condescend to lying. Now, Cortes was not only very astute, but, according to his notions, highly honourable. A genuine hidalgo, and a thoroughly loyal man, he would as soon have thought of committing a small theft as of uttering a falsehood in a despatch addressed to his sovereign.*

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* Indeed, in a letter to the Emperor he says that at no time, and for no interest would he tell a lie to

Cortes could well afford to be satisfied with the deaths of the two principal kings, and to spare the other conspirators, as his discovery of this conspiracy deepened the impression which the Mexicans already entertained of his supernatural knowledge. They had seen him, when most perplexed with the difficulties and dangers of the journey, call for a mysterious-looking mirror or chart, and after watching with solicitude the trembling movements of a needle suspended over the flat surface, determine at once upon his line of march, and never suffer the direction to be varied until they came out upon the very town which had been the object of the march. When, as they thought, the Spanish Commander discovered this conspiracy (for, doubtless, the faithless Mexican kept his own counsel, or he would have been torn to pieces by his countrymen), what could they imagine but that he had been conversing with that mysterious little rod of iron, whose tremblings had again revealed to its master

Faith amongst the Mexicans in the supernatural knowledge of Cortes.

His Majesty ("nunca Dios quiera que yo á V. M. diga mentira en ningun tiempo ni por ningun interese)."— *Coleccion de Documentos para la Historia de Mexico*, por Joaquin Garcia Icazbalceta. Tom. i. Mexico, 1858.

the course to be taken in the midst of the dangers that surrounded him? Cortes was not the man to omit any opportunity of impressing others with a sense of his power. The belief of the attendant Mexicans in the knowledge that was thus magically conveyed to the Spanish Commander grew to such a height, that some of them, whose consciences must have been quite clear of this conspiracy, begged him to look in the mirror and the chart, and see there whether they were not loyal towards him.*

This has been construed as an instance of the "simplicity" of the Mexicans; but it may be

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* "Porque como han visto que para acertar aquel camino, muchas veces sacaba una carta de marear y un aguja, en especial cuando se acertó el camino de Calgoatrepan, han dicho á muchos españoles que por allí lo saqué, y aun á mí me han dicho algunos de ellos queriéndome hacer cierto que me tienen buena voluntad, que para que viese sus buenas intenciones, que me rogaban mucho que mirase el espejo y la carta, y allí veria como ellos me tenian buena voluntad, pues por allí sabia todas las otras cosas. E yo tambien les hice entender que ansí era la verdad, é que en aquella aguja é carta de marear via yo é sabia é se me descubrian todas las cosas."—*Relacion al* EMPERADOR *por* HERNAN CORTES. *Documentos Inéditos,* tom. iv. p. 55.

doubted whether there are not many amongst ourselves who would be very much puzzled to explain the phenomenon which perplexed and awed the Mexican troops. And it must be remembered that the knowledge which had been possessed by their priests, and stored up in their colleges, had, for the most part, been taken from them. If, in these times, a nation were suddenly deprived of its chief men in science and art, it would probably astound the world to see how soon the great body of that nation would degenerate into utter ignorance and superstition. The principal knowledge possessed by mankind is, even now, confined to a very few, comparatively speaking; and in those days, when the few were a favoured caste, and the Government was entirely aristocratic or despotic, the loss of the nobles, the priests, and the kings, was absolutely the destruction of the nation, as a nation. The Indian, who is now in such a state of stolidity that no reward, hardly, can induce him to stir from the squatting position that he has once taken up before the fire, is the lineal descendant, perhaps, of a man who projected, or helped to carry out, with cunning workmanship, constructions which are still a

How a nation might degenerate.

Knowledge confined to a few.

marvel to the most intelligent persons of the most civilized nations in the world.* The destructibility of such civilization as the Assyrian, Egyptian, Mexican, or Peruvian, and perhaps of

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* Ulloa, who travelled in Peru in the year 1736, says—"The disproportion between what I read and what I am going to relate, is so remarkable, that, on a retrospect towards past times, I am utterly at a loss to account for the universal change of things; especially when surrounded by such visible monuments of the industry, polity, and laws of the Indians of Peru, that it would be madness to question the truth of the accounts that have been given of them; for the ruins of these ancient works are still amazing. On the other hand, I can hardly credit my own eyes, when I behold that nation involved as it were in Cimmerian darkness—rude, indocile, and living in a barbarism little better than those who have their dwelling among the wastes, precipices, and forests. But what is still more difficult to conceive is, how these people, whose former wisdom is conspicuous in the equity of their laws, and the establishment of a government so singular as that under which they live, should at present show no traces of that genius and capacity which formed so excellent an œconomy, and so beautiful a system of social duties: though undoubtedly they are the same people, and still retain some of their ancient customs and manners."—Don George Juan, and Don Antonio de Ulloa. *Voyage to South America*, translated by J. Adams, vol. i. pp. 401, 404. London, 1806.

others as notable, whose names even have been lost, or exist only in symbols that may never be interpreted, is not merely a marked fact in the world's annals, but one which especially requires to be kept in mind throughout this narrative, in order to prevent us from falling into the delusion of supposing that the great works and remarkable polities we read of in the Mexican Empire are mythical or fabulous, while in truth they are quite within the domain of modern history, and rest upon similar testimony to that upon which we give credit to the annals of our own Henry the Eighth and Queen Elizabeth. The fathers of Bacon and Shakespeare were almost contemporaries of Montezuma.

The last of the Mexican monarchs being disposed of by this severe, but, as it seemed to Cortes, necessary execution, our natural sympathy with the vanquished makes us glad to find that the army murmured at these things, and that there were some of the Spanish soldiers who thought the execution unjust. Bernal Diaz notes that Cortes was melancholy, depressed, and sleepless.* It is

Depression of Cortes after execution of Mexican kings.

* "Tambien quiero dezir, que como Cortés andava mal dispuesto, y aun mui pensativo y descontento del trabajoso camino que llevavamos, é como avia mandado

some satisfaction to imagine that bloody deeds, even such as have but the lesser stain of policy, render thick and heavy and phantomful the air around the beds of those who, to avoid the memories of such deeds, need the forgetfulness of sleep far more than other men.

Before Cortes started from Espíritu Santo, he sent to the Lords of Tabasco and Xicalango, desiring that they would come to him, or send persons with whom he could confer. The caciques sent such persons, who, in reply to the inquiries of Cortes, informed him that on the sea-coast, beyond the country that is called Yucatan, there were certain Spaniards who did the people of that country much harm, burning towns, and slaying

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ahorcar á Guatemuz, é su primo el señor de Tacuba, sin tener justicia para ello, é avia cada dia hambre, é que adolescian Españoles, é morian muchos Mexicanos, pareció ser que de noche no reposava de pensar en ello, y saliesse de la cama donde dormia á passear en una sala, adonde avia ídolos, que era aposento principal de aquel puebleçuelo, adonde tenian otros ídolos, y descuidóse y cayó mas de dos estados abaxo, y se descalabró la cabeça, y calló que no dixo cosa buena ni mala sobre ello, salvo curarse la descalabradura, y todo se lo passava y sufria. —Bernal Diaz, cap. 177.

the inhabitants, by which the merchants of Tabasco and Xicalango (some of them probably being the persons then speaking) had lost all commerce with that coast. "And as eye-witnesses," Cortes says, "they gave an account of all the towns on the coast, until you come to the country where Pedrarias de Avila, your Majesty's Governor, is, and they made me a map upon a cloth of the whole of it."*

Two centres of conquest, Darien and Mexico.

The allusion in the above words of Cortes to Pedrarias de Avila may remind us that the radiations from these two great centres of conquest and discovery in America, namely, Darien and Mexico, were about to intersect. After a short time the Darienites will go southwards to Peru, and the Mexican conquerors northwards to California.

The daily movements of the march of Cortes cannot be recorded in a brief biography. But,

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* "Y como testigos de vista me dieron razon de casi todos los pueblos de la costa hasta llegar donde está Pedrarias de Avila, gobernador de V. M., y me hicieron una figura en un paño de toda ella."—*Documentos Inéditos*, tom. vi. p. 11.

if we would appreciate justly the nature and resources of New Spain, we must observe that the territories traversed by Cortes possessed signs of a civilization not far inferior to that of the Mexicans.




He speaks of Iztapan as "a very great thing." He mentions its pastures, its lands for agriculture, and its being surrounded by a considerable extent of settled territory.* Of Acalán, the province in

Signs of civilization which Cortes meets with on his route.

* "Este pueblo de Iztapan es muy grande cosa y está

which the Mexican Kings were hanged, he says also that this was "a very great thing," where there are many towns and much people, and that it abounded in provisions, amongst which he specifies honey. He also speaks of the merchants of that country.* Further on, in Macatlan, he comes upon a fortress, of which he thinks it worth while to give a minute account to the Emperor, describing its battlements, embrasures, traverses and turrets, "showing such good order and arrangement, that it could not be better, he says, considering the arms with which they fought."

Fortress at Macatlan.

At Chaantal he found temples built after the fashion of the Mexicans; and we now know what remarkable buildings he might have seen, had his route diverged but a few miles from that which was taken, for he passed near the great city of

Temples at Chaantal.

Cortes passed near Copan.

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asentado en la ribera de un muy hermoso rio: tiene muy buen asiento para poblar en él españoles: tiene muy hermosa ribera donde hay buenos pastos: tiene muy buenas tierras de labranzas: tiene buena comarca de tierra poblada."—*Relacion al* EMPERADOR; *Documentos Inéditos*, tom. iv. p. 31.

* "Hay en ella muchos mercaderes y gentes que tratan en muchas partes, y son ricos de esclavos y de las cosas que se tratan en la tierra."—*Documentos Inéditos* tom, iv. p. 55.

Copan,* the monuments of which remain to this day to astound the traveller and perplex the antiquarian.

End of Christoval de Olid. 1524.

It was not until Cortes approached the sea-coast, that he heard that Christoval de Olid had been assassinated by Francisco de Las Casas, the captain who had been sent to subdue the rebel. The first object of the expedition was, therefore, in great measure attained. Cortes, however, proceeded to visit the new settlement. Indeed, it would have been useless for him to attempt to

Cortes proceeds to Truxillo. 1525.

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* "As to Copan, I shall not at present offer any conjecture in regard to the antiquity of these buildings, merely remarking that at ten leagues' distance is a village called Las Tres Cruces, or the Three Crosses, from three crosses, which, according to tradition, Cortes erected at that place when on his conquering march from Mexico to Honduras by the Lake of Peten. Cortes, then, must have passed within twenty or thirty miles of the place now called Palenque. If it had been a living city, its fame must have reached his ears, and he would probably have turned aside from his road to subdue and plunder it. It seems, therefore, but reasonable to suppose that it was at that time desolate and in ruins, and even the memory of it lost."—STEPHENS, *Incidents of Travel in Central America*, vol. ii. chap. xx. p. 357.

return by the way he had come: and it was while he was staying in Truxillo, and busying himself with his colony there, that intelligence reached him of the lamentable proceedings which had taken place in Mexico during his absence.

Bad news from Mexico.




He had come all this way to punish the rebellion of one of his captains, and had left behind him the seeds of a most deplorable sedition which was to break forth in his chief city. In commenting upon this state of things to his mas-

ter, the Emperor, he uses a very striking expression, condemnatory of the folly and unfaithfulness which was manifested for the most part by those official persons in the colonies who were entrusted with delegated authority. "They think," he says, "that unless they make themselves ridiculous, they hardly seem to themselves to be in power"—(*literally*, "unless they commit folly, they think they do not wear the plume"*), a proverbial expression which probably came from the East, and which embodies the deep sense of misgovernment that had been felt by subject millions whose only protest against the folly and caprice of their rulers was some dire proverb of this kind.

The conduct of Cortes on this occasion gives great insight into his character. He was much urged by his followers to go at once by sea to Mexico. His presence there was greatly needed. No one was more aware of this than he was himself. Still, he hesitated to go; for it was a marked peculiarity of this great man, that his attention was not always directed to what seemed most

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* "Que sino hacen befa no portan penacho."—*Doc. Inéd.* tom. iv. p. 131.

The large views of Cortes.

pressing, but often to some duty based upon general rules of action, and a large foresight of what would in the end be politic. His conduct at the siege of Mexico, in sending to succour the Indian allies, when he himself had just suffered defeat, was an instance of this largeness of view. And, on the present occasion, the state of the King's affairs in Honduras, and the opportunity for enlarging the conquest there formed powerful attractions to keep him in the spot where he then was. In this perplexity he sought inspiration from above; and, after solemn prayers and processions, the course of returning to Mexico seemed to him the better way.* Accordingly, arranging his affairs in Honduras, he prepared to set sail for New Spain. Thrice, however, he was compelled to return to land: once on account of a sudden calm, and also from hearing that the people he had

Cortes sets sail for New Spain.

* "Y estando en esta perplejidad consideré que ninguna cosa puede ser bien hecha ni guiada sino es por mano del Hacedor y Movedor de todas, y hice decir misas y hacer procesiones y otros sacrificios suplicando á Dios me encaminase en aquello de que él mas se sirviese, y despues de hecho esto por algunos dias parecióme que todavía debia posponer todas las cosas y ir á remediar aquellos daños."—*Doc. Inéd.* tom. iv. p. 131.

left on shore were inclined to be seditious: a second time, because the main-yard (*la entena mayor*) snapped asunder: and the third time, because of a violent north wind which drove his vessel back after he had made fifty leagues from the coast.* Thinking that these were signs that God did not approve of the course he had adopted, Cortes again sought for divine guidance; and this

Is thrice driven back.

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* This would have been the time for Cortes to have consulted the stars, but his clear and pious mind abjured all such vain attempts at knowledge; and amidst his numerous retinue no such attendant as an astrologer was to be found. He believed profoundly in the immediate action of a superintending Providence, but was not likely to seek for hope or guidance from any created things. It is remarkable that the science, if it may so be called, of astrology, which had great hold upon shrewd persons, such as Louis the Eleventh, Pope Paul the Third, Catherine de Medicis, Wallenstein, the Earl of Leicester, and many other historical personages, both in that age and in those which preceded and followed it, had no influence whatever upon the Spanish monarchs —Ferdinand, Charles the Fifth, and Philip the Second. Nor does astrology seem to have had any hold upon the minor personages connected with the conquest of America. The hard, distinct faith of the Spaniard, and perhaps his hatred of the Moor, made him averse from wizardry, or anything that resembled it.

Resolves then to stay in Honduras.

time, after renewed prayers and processions, he resolved to stay where he was, and to despatch a trusty messenger to his followers in Mexico, telling them that he was alive, and informing them of what had happened to him. They had fled for refuge to the Franciscan convent in that city. On hearing this good news they took heart, sallied forth, and deposed the Factor and the Veedor.

Fresh intelligence from Mexico.

Meanwhile, the vessel in which Cortes had sent his messenger returned to him at Truxillo; and in it came a cousin of his, a Franciscan friar, named Diego Altamirano. From this monk, and from the letters which he brought, Cortes learned to the full extent the scandals and the tumults which had taken place during his absence in Mexico, and the necessity there seemed to be for his immediate return to the seat of his government. He had intended to return by Nicaragua and Guatemala, being well aware of the disastrous state of those provinces, and of the services which his presence might render. But the troubles of Mexico summoned him with a louder voice, and he resolved to return forthwith to that city. Accordingly, on the 25th of April, 1526, he set

Cortes resolves to return to Mexico, April, 1526.

sail for New Spain. A violent storm drove him out of his way to Cuba, and he landed at the port of Havannah, where in a few days he learned that his party had been successful, and had deposed the Factor and the Veedor. On the 16th of May he set sail again for New Spain, landed near the town of Medellin, and made a triumphant entry into Mexico on the 19th of June 1526, amidst the acclamations of his own people and of the natives. Cortes was much changed. There were many persons who failed at first to recognise in his haggard, sickly countenance, imprinted with the sufferings and dangers he had undergone during his journey to Honduras, and in his subsequent voyage, the brilliant and handsome Cortes, who, only twenty months before, had marched out of the city at the head of a gallant company,—himself the chief attraction, both by the gifts of nature and of fortune, for the admiring gaze of the multitude. On entering Mexico, Cortes went forthwith to the Franciscan monastery to give thanks to God, and to confess his sins.* He stayed there six days; and

Cortes returns to Mexico, June, 1526.

* "Y allí estuve seis dias con los frailes hasta dar cuenta á Dios de mis culpas."—*Doc. Inéd.* tom. iv, p. 147.

when he quitted the monastery, he no longer enjoyed the supreme power in New Spain. Indeed, two days before taking leave of the friars, a messenger arrived from Medellin, informing him that certain vessels had come from Spain, and the report was that a Judge had come in one of them. The report proved to be true, and the Judge was the Licentiate Luis Ponce de Leon, who had been appointed by Charles the Fifth, in November, 1525, to take a *residencia* of Cortes.*

Cortes was not aware at first of the powers of Ponce de Leon; and we may fully believe him, when he declares that he was glad of the news of this Judge's arrival, as it would save him from proceeding to arraign the Factor and the Veedor, in which cause, as he was the person principally injured, he would be accused of a passionate bias in his own favour, "which is the thing," he says, "that I most abhor."†

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* See "Carta de Carlos V. á Hernan Cortes avisándole que habia mandado tomarle Residencia."—*Doc. Inéd.* tom. i. p. 101.

† "Me parecia que cualquier cosa que en ello proveyese, podria ser juzgado por los malos á pasion, que es la cosa que yo mas aborrezco."—*Doc. Inéd.* tom. iv. p. 147.

The day after the arrival of the messenger from Medellin, when Cortes had come from the monastery to attend a bull-fight, on the festival of San Juan, there were brought to him two despatches, one being the King's letter of credentials, informing him that Ponce de Leon was appointed to take a *residencia* of him, and the other from Ponce de Leon himself, telling Cortes that he was hastening to Mexico. Cortes, though anxious and alert to receive the King's Justiciary with all reverence and submission, could hardly prepare to meet the Judge with due pomp, before he entered the city on the 2nd of July, 1526.

June 24 (Nativity of St. John the Baptist).

Ponce de Leon comes, July 2nd, 1526.

The next morning it was arranged that the wands of office should be given up. So, after hearing mass, Ponce de Leon, in presence of the people, and of the authorities, produced his powers, received the wands of the Alcaldes and the Alguazils, and immediately returned them,—all but one, which was that of Cortes, for Ponce de Leon, taking that himself, said with much courtesy, "This of my Lord Governor I must have myself."

The government is taken from Cortes.

The official persons, and Cortes among the

rest, kissed the royal orders, and declared their readiness to obey them.

The dutiful obedience to Cortes to his King is rendered more manifest when we come to know* that Fray Tomas Ortiz, the head of the Dominicans who accompanied Ponce de Leon, and entered Mexico with him, went immediately to Cortes, and informed him that the Judge had authority from the Emperor to behead him and to confiscate all his goods. The friar suggested resistance, but Cortes was far too wise and too faithful to take the advice.

Testimony of Father Motolinia.

Before narrating what took place at the *residencia* of Cortes, we may discern from the testimony† of an eye-witness, Father Motolinia, who was greatly honoured by his contemporaries, and

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* "Me certificó que Luis Ponce traia provision de V. M. para me prender, é degollar é tomar todos mis bienes, é que lo sabia de muy cierta ciencia como persona que venia de la corte."—See Letter addressed by Cortes to the Bishop of Osma.—*Doc. Inéd.* tom. i, p. 28.

† In the library of Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bart., of Middle Hill, is an original manuscript letter from Fray Toribio Motolinia de Paredes, to Don Antonio Pimentel Conde de Benavente, dated "Dia de San Matia," (February 24) 1541.

trusted, as we have seen, by Cortes himself, at what expense of life and suffering the new order of things was brought about in Mexico.

This excellent monk gives an account of what he considers to have been the ten "plagues" of New Spain. 1. The small-pox. 2. The slaughter during the conquest. 3. A great famine which took place immediately after the capture of the city. 4. The Indian and negro overseers (*la quarta plaga fue de los calpixques . . . y negros*). 5. The excessive tributes and services demanded from the Indians. 6. The gold mines. 7. The rebuilding of Mexico. 8. The making of slaves, in order to work them in the mines. 9. The transport service for the mines. 10. The dissensions amongst the Spaniards themselves.

The "ten plagues" of New Spain.

Motolinia's description of the rebuilding of Mexico is both minute and vivid. He says, that though the streets were very wide, the work was so busily carried on, that a man could scarcely make his way through them.* He describes the loss of

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* "Apenas podia hombre romper por algunas calles y calçadas, aunque son muy anchas."—*Carta de Fray* MOTOLINIA. MS.

The rebuilding of Mexico.

life among the Indians from accidents caused by the demolition of old buildings, and the construction of new ones. He says, that not only had they to seek the materials for building, but also to provide the food, and pay the workmen.* He confirms the statement before made, that the work was done by sheer force of human labour; and that a stone, or beam of wood, which should have taken a hundred men only, was dragged by four hundred.† Such was the fervour, he adds, with which the work was carried on, that the songs and shouts of the workmen did not cease day or night during the first years of the rebuilding of Mexico.‡

When we consider these "plagues" we may fairly maintain, that a conquered people have seldom been more hardly dealt with by the diseases

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* "A su costa buscan los materiales, y pagan los pedreros y carpinteros, y si ellos mesmos no traen que comer, ayunan."—*Carta de Fray* MOTOLINIA. MS.

† "La piedra ó viga que avia menester çien ombres trayan la quatrocientos."—*Ut supra.*

‡ "Tienen de costumbre de yr cantando y dando vozes, y los cantos y vozes apenas çessavan de noche ni de dia por el gran hervor que trayan en la hedificacion del pueblo los primeros años."—*Ut supra.*

and the vices of their conquerors. It was also a surplusage of misery that the conquered territory should be rich in mines, and that the conquerors should have brought with them slaves of another race.



# CHAPTER XVIII.

*The Residencia of Cortes—Death of Ponce de Leon—Confused state of the Government of Mexico—Ponce de Leon's instructions about encomiendas come to naught—Encomiendas allowed by the Spanish Court—An audiencia created for Mexico—Instructions to this Audiencia do not vary the nature of encomiendas in New Spain.*

THE *residencia* of Cortes was commenced; and during the whole time that it lasted (namely, seventeen days), not a single charge was brought against him.* In his fifth letter to the Emperor, he successfully repels the accusations made against him by "serpent

The reply of Cortes to the accusations made against him.

* "Y luego fué pregonado públicamente en la plaza de esta ciudad mi residencia, y estuve en ella diez y siete dias sin que se me pusiese demanda alguna."—*Documentos Inéditos*, tom. iv. p. 150.

tongues," with regard to his wealth and possessions, asserting that, if he has received much, he has spent much more,—and that too, not in buying heritages for himself, but in extending the patrimony of the King. He declares, that at the present moment, he is poor, and much indebted.* Indeed, he makes the following curious offer to the King. His Majesty had been informed that Cortes possessed two hundred *cuentos* of rent, upon which Cortes offers to His Majesty to commute all that he has for twenty *cuentos* of rent in New Spain, or ten in the mother country.

The *residencia* of Cortes, however, was broken

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* "Y cuanto á lo que dicen de tener yo mucha parte de la tierra, así lo confieso, y que he habido harta suma y cantidad de oro; pero digo que no ha sido tanta que haya bastado para que yo deje de ser pobre y estar adeudado en mas de cincuenta mil pesos de oro sin tener un castellano de que pagarlo, porque si mucho he habido, muy mucho mas he gastado, y no en comprar mayorazgos ni otras rentas para mí, sino en dilatar por estas partes el señorío y patrimonio Real de V. A. conquistando con ello y con poner mi persona á muchos trabajos, riesgos y peligros, muchos reinos y señoríos para Vuestra Excelencia, los cuales no podrán encubrir los malos con sus serpentinas lenguas."—*Documentos Inéditos*, tom. iv. p. 154.

off by an unexpected event. Ponce de Leon had been ill before this formal ceremony of taking the wands of justice: he returned to his apartments, shivering, and unable to eat. He threw himself on his bed, from which he was never to rise. The fever increased: in a few days it was evident that he was about to die; and summoning to his bedside the King's civil servants, in their presence he delivered his wand of office to Marcos de Aguilar, and soon after expired. In those days eminent persons seldom died suddenly without the suspicion arising of their having been assisted out of the world; and, as Ponce de Leon's death, at this juncture, was apparently convenient for Cortes, there were not wanting people who probably believed, and loudly asserted, that the new Governor had been poisoned by the man he came to supersede. This accusation, no doubt, travelled, with all the swiftness of malignity, to the Spanish Court.

Ponce de Leon dies. 1526.

Calumny, which can not only make a cloud seem like a mountain, but can almost transform a cloud into a mountain, was often busy with the name of Cortes. This is the third time — I almost scorn to mention it—that he was accused

of poisoning persons whose existence was supposed to be inconvenient to him.*

Meanwhile, in Mexico, it was immediately a subject of discussion, as might have been foreseen, whether Ponce de Leon could delegate the power he had received from the Emperor. That question, after many juntas (for the disputed point is a difficult one), was determined in favour of Marcos de Aguilar, who was accordingly accepted as the Governor. There is always, however, a loss of power in these transmissions of authority. The loss was not of much importance in the present case, for Marcos de Aguilar was a sickly man, and the charge of such a difficult government so rapidly augmented his malady, that he died about two months after his appointment. Again Cortes seemed to be delivered, by a happy accident, from the troubles of his *residencia*. Before his death, Marcos de Aguilar had, in his turn, taken care to nominate a successor, and had chosen the Treasurer, Alonzo de Estrada. The question respecting the delegation of authority was renewed,

Marcos de Aguilar succeeds Ponce de Leon.

He dies.

* Francisco de Garay, and Catharine de Xuarez, the first wife of Cortes, were said to have been poisoned by him. These reports were utterly without foundation.

and much disputed over. The result, too, was different, for it was at last agreed upon that Estrada should govern, but in concert with Gonzalo de Sandoval, and that Cortes should have charge of the government of the Indians, and of the war department. Indeed, it appears as if the main body of the civil servants of Mexico wished that Cortes should resume the whole power which he had held before the arrival of Ponce de Leon, until the Emperor should decide what was to be done. But Cortes very prudently refused, saying, that "his fidelity and singleness of purpose would thus be more clearly manifested." This was the more self-denying on the part of Cortes, as it is probable, from what afterwards occurred, that he knew he should find no friend in Alonzo de Estrada, although this was the same man in whom Cortes had placed such confidence, and whom he had left in authority when he undertook the journey to Honduras.

The Treasurer and Sandoval succeed Marcos de Aguilar.

Alonzo de Estrada had not been long in office before a matter of dispute, originally trifling, arose, which carried the enmity of the Governor and Cortes to a great height. An inhabitant of Mexico, named Diego de Figueroa, had a violent

Dispute between Estrada and Cortes.

quarrel with Christoval Cortejo, a servant of Sandoval, and therefore a dependant of Cortes. From words they proceeded to blows, and Figueroa was wounded. Estrada, with the utmost rashness, listening only to one side, and pronouncing sentence within an hour after the affair had occurred, ordered Cortejo's left hand to be cut off, and, after it had been cut off, sent him to prison, in order to enforce his departure from Mexico the next day, a punishment which the furious Governor resolved to inflict, in addition to the mutilation that the poor man had already suffered. Not satisfied with this, Estrada, fearing that Cortes would not bear quietly such treatment of a follower, sent a notification to Cortes himself that he should quit Mexico, and, under penalty of his life, should not venture to contravene this order. The whole city was inflamed with rage at the conduct of the Governor, and the inhabitants rushed to place themselves at the disposal of Cortes, threatening open rebellion; but Cortes, ever cautious, only hastened the more to depart, while the people were striving to prevent his departure.

Cortes banished from Mexico.

Cortes having gone, and the inhabitants of

Mexico being in the highest state of rage and disgust, the elements of a civil war were actively at work, when certain monks of the Order of St. Dominic, who, at the request of Cortes, had been sent from Spain in the company of Ponce de Leon, now interposed to check the tumult, and to assuage the fury of the contending parties. Most of these monks had, like Ponce de Leon, been very ill on their arrival in the country; but the two who were most able to exert themselves on this occasion, Fathers Tomas Ortiz and Domingo de Betanzos, succeeded in reconciling Cortes, and Estrada, so much so, that Cortes "drew out of the font"—to use an expression of those days—an infant son of Estrada, who had just been born, and, according to the narrator of this story, ever afterwards the two great men were loving gossips, "that being a relationship," he adds, "of close alliance in those times, and not a little in these."* The reconcilement of Cortes and Estrada took place in the year 1527.

The Dominican monks reconcile Cortes and Estrada.

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* "Parentesco de grande union en aquellos tiempos, y no poco celebrado en estos."—Remesal, *Hist. de Chiapa y Guatemala*, lib. i. cap. 8.

Every effort hitherto made to control the power of Cortes having, from some cause or other, failed, the Spanish Court began to view that power with increased jealousy and alarm. Moreover, the Court must have been bewildered by representations of the most conflicting nature, coming from the various chiefs and factions of Mexico. The Emperor, therefore, and his ministers resolved to change the form of government. Hispaniola was already governed by an *Audiencia*. The Admiral, Diego Columbus, son of the great discoverer, had never had much weight in affairs, and his death, which took place in this year (1528), put an end to any semblance even of other authority than that of the *Audiencia*. It was now thought advisable to create a similar body for Mexico, consisting of four members, with a president. Nuño de Guzman, who had hitherto been employed in the government of Panuco, was appointed President. As the presence of this new governing body was thought to be urgently wanted in Mexico, considerable haste was made in preparing the instructions for them. Among the first things that they were to attempt was the *residencia* of Cortes; and, in order that this investigation

Death of Diego Columbus, 1528.

An *Audiencia* created for Mexico, with Nuño de Guzman for President, 1528.

might be more free, they were to press Cortes to quit Mexico, and to come to Court. It may be noticed as an instance of the politic nature of the Spanish Administration, that two letters were prepared for Cortes urging him to come. One was written by the Bishop of Osma, the President of the Council of the Indies, in which the Bishop assured him that the King wished to see and consult with him, the Bishop promising to use all his own interest in favour of Cortes. In case Cortes should disregard this letter, the *Audiencia* were to produce a letter from the King, requesting his assistance and advice, and holding out assurances of favour and reward.

Cortes arrives in Spain, May, 1528.

But the authorities in Spain need not have given themselves all this trouble, for Cortes, who seems generally to have done the right thing at the right time, suddenly appeared at Court to assist their deliberations. It is curious that, at the same moment, the other great Commander, Francisco Pizarro, was also at Court; and these two captains naturally excited the interest and admiration of the Spanish people.*

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* "Fue cosa notable, ver juntos á estos dos Hombres,

The arrival of Cortes—which resembled the return of Columbus, for the Conqueror of Mexico had also brought with him specimens of the riches and the curiosities of his new country—dispelled at once the vapours of doubt and calumny which had lately obscured his name and his deeds with the Spanish Court.

The details of the journey of Cortes to Court, and of his stay there, are so interesting, that they must be told. He came to seek powerful friends, and on the journey he lost the truest friend perhaps, that, amongst men, he had ever possessed. Sandoval, the constant companion of Cortes, was not divided from him in this journey. They landed together at Palos, and Sandoval feeling unwell, was left there, while Cortes went to the monastery of La Rabida (a place that had known the footsteps of many illustrious personages), to perform his devotions. Sandoval grew worse; and the man who had been in so many dangerous affrays, face to face with enemies worthy of his

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que eran mirados, como Capitanes de los mas notables del Mundo, en aquel tiempo, aunque el uno acababa sus Hechos mas sustanciales, í el otro los comen çaba."—HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. IV. lib. iv, cap. 1.

prowess, was obliged to feign slumber while he saw his villanous host, a ropemaker, enter his room by stealth, and carry off his gold. Cortes, on being apprised of his friend's danger, hurried back to Palos, where he arrived in time to listen to Sandoval's last words, and to receive his last injunctions. The body of Sandoval was carried to the monastery of La Rabida, and there interred with much pomp.

Death of Sandoval.

When there are two friends of very different ages, and one dies, it is much sadder for the survivor if it be the younger one that death has taken. Sandoval might have found another Cortes, but Cortes would never find another "Son Sandoval" as he was wont to call him. Sandoval's age was about thirty when he died.

Cortes, in deep mourning, pursued his way to Court, receiving all honour from the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and other great persons who entertained him on his way. The Duke of Bejar, into whose family it had been arranged that Cortes was to marry, had prepared the Emperor's mind to receive the great Captain favourably. The next day after his arrival, Cortes had an audience.

Cortes has an interview with Charles V.

He would have knelt before his sovereign, but the Emperor begged him immediately to rise. Cortes then recounted his deeds and his sufferings, and the sinister opposition he had met with. There is reason to believe that he was a much better speaker than writer. Cautious and reserved men often are, They need the stimulus of an audience, and the pressure of a great occasion, to overcome their reserve, and to surprise them into eloquence. At the conclusion of a speech which must have been among the best worth hearing of those delivered in that age, he said that His Majesty must be tired of listening to him, and that perhaps he had spoken with too much boldness for a subject to use in his sovereign's presence. Whereupon he begged to be pardoned for any inadvertency or boldness, and to be allowed to present His Majesty with a memorial, containing the full details of the narrative he had briefly recounted. Again he sought to throw himself at the feet of the Emperor, and again Charles commanded him to rise. In fine, the Emperor's reception of him was most favourable. He listened to him readily; and, with the usual intelligence which Charles manifested in affairs, delighted to inspect (*holgó de ver*) the

His Speech.

strange men, animals, and products which the Conqueror had brought with him from Mexico.*

Gossip about Cortes, while he was at Court.

I cannot relate at any length the little anecdotes and small scandal which were current about Cortes at this time: how he fell into favour or out of favour with this or that great personage; how the Empress was a little dissatisfied at the jewels he presented to her, because those which he gave to his betrothed, Doña Juana de Zuniga, were finer and perhaps more exquisite; or how, at chapel, he took a place nearer to the Emperor than some thought his rank would warrant, although this was done at the Emperor's desire.

Undoubtedly, the favour which Charles showed to Cortes was such as might provoke the jealousy of courtiers. When Cortes fell ill, the Emperor went to visit him at his inn,—an honour of the rarest kind, and of the greatest significance. The substantial rewards which His Majesty conferred on Cortes were,—that he created him Marquis del Valle de Guaxaca; that he gave orders to the *Audiencia* of Mexico (who then were probably at Seville, preparing for their voyage), not to dis-

* Herrera, "Hist. de las Indias," dec. IV. lib. IV. cap. 1.

turb the Marquis's possessions in New Spain (*que no hiziesse novedad en sus Indios*);* that he assigned to him territories, including three-and-twenty thousand vassals; and that he gave him two rocky islands for hunting-grounds.†

The Emperor did more than all this. He listened to the advice and the recommendations of Cortes, who was enabled to benefit his friends—the Bishop of Mexico and the Franciscan monks—and to induce the Emperor to found a nunnery, and to endow with suitable portions the four daughters of Montezuma, whom Cortes had in his charge.

His requests to the Emperor.

There is on record a single sentence of the Emperor's, that must have been addressed to Cortes in some private interview, which shows the gracious esteem in which he was held by his sovereign. Borrowing a metaphor from the archery-ground, and gracefully, as it seems, alluding to a former misappreciation of the ser-

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* Herrera, "Hist. de las Indias," dec. IV. lib. vi. cap. 4

† One of these was probably the *Cerro del Marques*, which Cortes had gained on his advance to the siege of Mexico.

Herrera, dec. IV. lib. vi. cap. 4.

The Emperor declares that he will reward Cortes justly.

vices of Cortes, the Emperor said that he wished to deal with him as those who contend with the cross-bow, whose first shots go wide of the mark, and then they improve and improve, until they hit the centre of the white. So, continued His Majesty, he wished to go on until he had shot into the white of what should be done to reward the Marquis's deserts; and meanwhile, nothing was to be taken from him which he then held.*

It is very pleasing to find that Cortes did not forget his old friends the Tlascalans, but dwelt on their services, and procured from the Emperor an order that they should not be given in *encomienda* to His Majesty, or to any other person.

Finally, Cortes, with a vigilant eye to the

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* "Su Majestad me hizo merced de decirme que no se me habia de quitar nada de lo que tenia hasta ser informado, y que se queria haber conmigo como los que se muestran á jugar á la ballesta, que los primeros tiros dan fuera del terrero, y así van enmendando hasta dar en el blanco y fiel, y desta manera su Majestad queria ir hasta dar en el fiel de lo que mis servicios merescian, que entre tanto no se me quitaba ni se me habia de quitar nada de lo que tenia."—El Marques del Valle *al* Presidente *del Consejo Real de las Indias.* Mejico, 20 de Setiembre de 1538. *Doc. Inéd.* tom. iv. p. 195.

future, treated with the Emperor respecting any discovery which he might make in the "Sea of the South."

One important favour Cortes could not obtain. He probably had the tact not to broach the subject with the Emperor, but his friends no doubt endeavoured to gain for him the government of Mexico. To grant this boon would have been foreign to the jealous policy of the Spanish Court, which was very reluctant to convert a discoverer, or a conqueror, into a Viceroy. Cortes was left, however, in the important office of Captain-General.

Is not appointed Governor of New Spain.

The Emperor, with his accustomed kindness, gave orders that the Indians* whom Cortes had brought with him (among whom were a son of Montezuma and a son of the Tlascalan Chief

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* Cortes brought with him Indians who excelled in the games of New Spain; and perhaps the most interesting thing for a modern reader to notice is, that the balls they played with were apparently made of caoutchouc,—"Entre los quales llevaba doçe jugadores extremados de la provinçia de Tascaltecle del juego del batey, que es de pelota gruessa hecha de leche de çiertos árboles é otras mixturas, que salta la pelota mucho."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat. de Indias*, lib. xxxiii. cap. 49.

Magisca, who had been baptized by the name of Lorenzo) should be clothed, and be gratified by presents, in order that they might return contented to their own country. The Emperor also ordered that a monk, named Fray Antonio de Cuidad Rodrigo, should take charge of these Indians, in order to see that they were kindly treated on their way home; and money was given to them to buy images and crucifixes, to carry with them.



# CHAPTER XIX.

*Arrival of the Audiencia—Great Disputes between the Protectors of the Indians and the Audiencia—the Auditors prosecute the Bishop of Mexico—The Bishop excommunicates the Auditors—A great Junta in Spain on the subject of the Indies.*

THE officers constituting the *Audiencia* having received their instructions, set sail from Seville for New Spain, at the end of August, 1528, and arrived at Vera Cruz on the 6th of December of that year. From thence they sent to summon Nuño de Guzman, who was to be their President; but, without waiting for him, having the Emperor's command to that effect, they made their entrance into the city of Mexico. The climate of this place seems uniformly to have had all the bad effects which ill-doers could have wished for upon the unhappy official men and lawyers who were sent

First *Audiencia* arrives in New Spain, Dec. 1528.

thither from the mother country. Two of the Auditors, the Licenciates Parada and Francisco Maldonado fell ill, and died within thirteen days after their arrival. This circumstance would tend to diminish the suspicions, if any still existed, of Cortes having been concerned in the opportune death of Ponce de Leon. The other Auditors commenced taking the *residencia* amidst a perfect hubbub of complaints, demands, and law-suits, principally directed against the absent Cortes, who was more happily engaged than in replying to them, by solemnizing his marriage with Juana de Zuñiga, daughter of the Count of Aguilar, and niece of the Duke of Bejar.

*Residencia* of Cortes.

The appointment of Nuño de Guzman was a most deplorable one. He appears to have had nothing about him of the nature of a statesman, but to have been a cruel, rapacious, inconsiderate man, whose career is strikingly similar to that of some of the captains who, under Pedrarias, had desolated the Terra-Firma. This bad appointment was probably caused by the desire of the Government in Spain to have a military man, of some repute in the Indies, to supply the place of Cortes, the fear of that great Conqueror being the

ruling motive which had given rise to the appointment of the *Audiencia.* When Nuño de Guzman came to join his colleagues in Mexico, though some care was taken in the general affairs of Government, yet the Auditors were accused of attending more to their private interests than to their public duties, and of being wholly neglectful of those royal orders, upon which so much stress had been laid, touching the liberty and good treatment of the Indians. Thence grew vehement disputes between the Auditors and the Protectors of the Indians,—not only the official Protectors, but the Franciscan Monks in the city of Mexico, who demanded the execution of these royal orders, saying, that otherwise the royal conscience would not be discharged. Nuño de Guzman and his Auditors, in the usual way of factious persons, who meet an accusation made against them by charges against the opposite party which have nothing to do with the matter in hand, replied that the Monks and the Protectors were partisans of Cortes, and rather defenders of him than of the Indians. Eventually the whole town was engaged on one side or other of these two factions; and, to use the words of the

Great dispute between the Protectors of the Indians and the new *Audiencia.*

royal historiographer, "so things went on with much confusion and shamefulness."*

Complaints from both factions were addressed to the Emperor, the Auditors accusing Cortes of having had the most treasonable intentions, declaring that the Bishops under pretence of being protectors of the Indians, meddled with the royal jurisdiction; that the Franciscan Monks were devoted partisans of the Marquis del Valle; and that, with regard to the Indians, the opinion of the *Audiencia* was, that the *encomiendas* should be made perpetual, in order that their masters might treat them with more love,—a plausible, but very insufficient, reason to justify a system of servitude.

The *Audiencia* advises the Emperor to make *encomiendas* perpetual.

On the other hand, the Bishop of Mexico was not slow in informing His Majesty of his view of the question. A letter of this prelate's exists, which perhaps was one of those which Charles the Fifth had before him when he wrote from Genoa, ordering a junta of the Great Council of Spain to be summoned, in order to consider again the government of Mexico; and this letter is so

* Herrera, "Hist. de las Indias," dec. iv. lib. iv. cap. 11.

admirably descriptive of the state of things which took place after the arrival of the first *Audiencia* at Mexico, that the Bishop's own words must be quoted. The date of the letter is August the 27th, 1529. "Also," the Bishop writes, "there came to me secretly, to make their complaints, the Lords of Huaxocingo, who at the time were in *encomienda* to Don Hernando Cortes, and they said that they served Hernando Cortes as his *mayordomos* commanded, and gave the tribute which was agreed upon, but that for some time the President and Auditors had cast upon them another tribute in addition to this; and what they thought more hard still was, that they had to bring each day, to the house of each Auditor, for his maintenance, seven fowls, and many quails, and seventy eggs, and wood, charcoal, and other trifling things, together with a large quantity of maize."* It appears, too, from the Bishop's letter, that this maize was not of their own growing, but that they had to buy it, and that their resources were now exhausted. The greatest

Bishop of Mexico's letter to the Emperor.

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* "Carta de Fray Juan de Zumarraga, Obispo de Mexico; Coleccion de Muñoz," MS., tom. 78.

Transport service the great burden of the Indians.

grievance, however, which these Chiefs had to complain of, was their being compelled to provide for the transport of these commodities. Their town was eight or ten leagues off; the way was cumbered with snow; and, to maintain such a daily service, a great many persons were necessary. Indeed, not only men, but pregnant women, and boys, were obliged to assist in carrying these burdens. The result was, that a hundred and thirteen persons had already died from this enforced toil. The Auditors arrived in December, 1528; so that in six or eight months, such had been the loss of life in a single *encomienda*, from this apparently trifling service of transport imposed upon it. The Chiefs, after begging the Bishop to defend them, assured him that no other resource was left for them but to fly to the mountains. "To whom," he says, "I replied the best I could, telling them that such proceedings were not the will of Your Majesty, and holding out to them hopes of a speedy remedy; so they went away secretly consoled. Then I

The Bishop endeavours to protect the Indians.

spoke to the President and Auditors, with no little affliction to myself, from my inability to remedy the wrong, informing them that certain *padres*

had written to me from Huaxocingo (that the *Audiencia* might not suspect that the Indian Chiefs had come to me to complain), and I told them (the Auditors) that I had Your Majesty's command to defend the Indians, and that I could not but endeavour to do so, even if I knew that it would cost me my life, and that they must bring their demands upon these Indians down to what was just, and that they should keep on record that I would do what I could to prevent these deaths. The President replied to me, that the Indians must do what the *Audiencia* ordered them, whether they died or not; and that if I put myself forward to defend them, the *Audiencia* would chastise me, as the Bishop of Zamora* had been chastised; and that the Indians must be taxed, and must live in the way that they ordered, and no other."†

Nor were these idle threats. The Bishop per-

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* Don Antonio de Acuña, Bishop of Zamora, who was strangled in the fortress of Simancas. His crime was, having taken the side of the *Comunidades* in the war against Charles the Fifth, on his accession to the throne.

† "Carta de Fray Juan de Zumarraga, C. Obispo de México; Coleccion de Muñoz," MS., tom. 78.

severed in maintaining the good cause,—preaching in favour of the instruction, conversion, and preservation of the natives, urging that a stop should be put to the sumptuous works which the Auditors were continually making at the cost of the Mexicans, and demanding the fulfilment of the royal ordinances. The Auditors met this last move on the part of the Bishop Protector, by condemning him in his temporalities; and, threatening the heaviest penalties, they prohibited the King's officers, and those who had to pay the tithes, from giving any means of support to the Bishop or his clergy. This prohibition, as appears from the law proceedings in this case, was in force for the whole of the year 1530. The Bishop, on his side, fought with spiritual weapons, and excommunicated the Auditors.

The Auditors proceed to extremities against the Bishop. 1530.

The Bishop excommunicates them.

The Franciscan Monks, who were ranged on the side of the Bishop, in making excuses afterwards (which they do with all humility), for the sad disturbances of these times, declare in the strongest terms that false witnesses were brought against them by the *Audiencia*. In the course of this statement, the monks take occasion to give their view of the natives. "It is a gentle

Franciscan Monks on the side of the Bishops.

people," they say, "doing more from fear than from virtue, and they work well, if they are permitted to enjoy the fruits of their labours. . . . . They lie to a reasonable amount, but little to any one who treats them well, or at least not so much" (this is the account that might be given as regards the truthfulness of most people in a state of servitude); "they are well disposed to religion, confessing very well, so that there is no need of asking them questions. They are given to drunkenness, and require restraint. . . . . The children of our monastery already know much, and teach others. They sing plain chant, and accompany the organ tolerably well."*

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* "Mienten razonablemente, pero poco con quien bien los trata, ó no tanto. Estos males tienen con otros bienes, que es gente que vienen bien á nuestra fé, confiésanse mucho bien así que no tien necesidad de preguntas. Por la mayor parte son viciosos en se emborrachar, í tienen gran necesidad de se les impedir . . . . para su salbacion é policía. Los niños de nuestras casas saben ya mucho, í enseñan á muchos. Cantan canto llano í canto de órgano conpetentemente."—*Al Consejo de Yndias*, Frai Juan, *electo*,—Frai Martinus de Valencia *Custos*, &c., Frai Luis de Fuensalida, *Guardian de* Tezcuco, — Frai Antonio Ortiz, *G. de*

Charles V. is made acquainted with the state of the Government at Mexico. 1529.

All these complaints and recriminations from the chief men in Mexico, which probably came together, and were delivered to Charles the Fifth at Barcelona, as he was on his way to Italy after the Treaty of Cambray, must have been a source of considerable disappointment and mortification to him. There could have been little doubt, in any statesman's mind, that Nuño de Guzman must be removed, and the Auditors superseded, "these ministers," to use the sarcastic words of Herrera, "having industriously conformed themselves to attend in no respect to the instructions which had been given to them." Charles the Fifth seems to have submitted the whole affair to his Government in Spain, and not merely to have referred to them the immediate question connected with the conduct of this *Audiencia*, but the general and great question of the liberty of the Indians in Mexico and elsewhere—namely, whether they were to be given in *encomienda* to their conquerors.

Charles V. refers the affairs of Mexico to his Ministers.

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Mexico, — Frai Antonio Maldonado, *G. de* Tlaclalmaxala, Fray Francisco Gimenez, *G. de* Cempoala. *De México desta casa de San Francisco*, 27 *Marzo*, 1531. *Coleccion de* Munoz, MS., tom. 79.

It was from Genoa,* and while the Emperor was engaged in inspecting his new conquests in Italy, that he wrote to his Government in Spain, of which the Empress was the head, commanding that a great Junta should be formed, consisting of the Council of State, the Council of the Royal Revenues, and the Council of the Indies. The reports from New Spain, and the already numerous royal orders and laws, which had been published in reference to the three great branches of Indian government, namely, the kind treatment, the liberty, and the conversion of the Indians (*para el buen tratamiento, libertad í conversion de los Indios*),† were to be laid formally before the Council, for them to decide upon the future legislation that would be necessary "for the discharge

A most important Junta held in Spain in reference to the Indies. 1529.

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* "Vuestra Magestad desde Génova, vistas las causas í razones que de Nueva-España de Governador, Religiosos, í otras personas vinieron embió á mandar que nos juntasemos los del Consejo Real, í de la Hacienda, con el Presidente, í los del Consejo de Yndias."—*Al* EMPERADOR, *el* ARZOBISPO DE SANTIAGO. *Presidente del Consejo Real, í el* CONDE (DE OSORNO), DON GARCIA MANRIQUE; *de Madrid*, 10 *Diciembre*, 1529. *Coleccion de* MUNOZ, MS., tom. 78.

† "Coleccion de Muñoz," MS., tom. 78.

of His Majesty's conscience, and the good government of those regions."

Cortes asked for his opinion.

It was probably on this occasion that the Council of the Indies asked for the opinion of Cortes in the matters of Indian slavery and *encomiendas*; for there exists a letter without date, written by Cortes to the Emperor, in reference to the question before the Council of the Indies.

Cortes discusses the whole subject with much brevity, force, and logical power. In order to secure the conquest, there must, he says, be a sufficient number of Spaniards in the newly-conquered land. These men must be supported. They cannot be paid in money; and the most convenient mode of payment will be by *encomiendas*. He then touches on the danger of depriving the Spaniards of their Indians, and suggests that the possession of these Indians tends to make the Spaniards root themselves in the new lands, whence will spring taxes and customs' duties for His Majesty.

He is, therefore, of opinion that the Indians should be given to the Spaniards. But the questions then remain—Who should give them? to

whom should they be given; and how should they be given?*

To decide these difficult questions he suggests a reference to the past history of the conquest in the Indies;† and, alluding to the ruin which had taken place in the West India Islands, he desires that it should be investigated whether this mischief proceeded from the conquest or from the course of government afterwards.‡

Cortes refers to the history of the West India Islands.

He suggests that no discovery or conquest should be attempted without the express licence of the Emperor, and that certain qualifications should be required in the person who is to receive any such licence.

With regard to making slaves, his opinion is, that on no pretext should it be allowed in the course of conquest. But when countries have

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* "Pero resta dezir lo que se á de dar, y á quien y cómo, que es donde pende todo."—Autograph Letter of CORTES to the Emperor, signed "El Marques del Valle," in the possession of Mr. Henry Stevens, of Vermont.

† "Lo primero advertir ante todas cosas en saver qué es la que se tubo en las conquistas que se an hecho?"—*Ut supra.*

‡ "Saber si este daño proçedió de la conquista ó del proçeso de la governaçion?"—*Ut supra.*

been conquered, if a rebellion should take place, he would then allow the captives to be made slaves. With regard to the slaves in Mexico, he thinks that many of them have been made slaves unjustly; but he would not approve of any investigation into this matter, on account of the difficulty. He would not, however, have their children brought up as slaves. Such were the counsels of Cortes; but the Junta summoned by Charles came to a much more favourable conclusion respecting the Indians.

Dec. 10, 1529.

The result of this great Council's deliberations was communicated to the Emperor by the Archbishop of Santiago and Don Garcia Manrique, Conde de Osorno, in these words:—"It has appeared to all of us that entire liberty should be given to the Indians, and that all the *encomiendas* which have been made of them should be taken away; and because it appears that to take them away at one stroke would produce inconvenience, and that the Spaniards might desert the land, that a moderate tribute should be fixed for the Indians to pay, and that the half of that tribute should be given for the first year to the *Encomenderos*, and

Recommendations of the Junta.

afterwards Your Majesty will be able to give vassals to whosoever shall deserve it, reserving for yourself the head townships." The emphatic order on this subject is given in one word (*Fiat*), "Let it be done," which is placed after the paragraph, quoted above, of the Report.



## CHAPTER XX.

*The second Audiencia arrives in Mexico—Proceedings of the Auditors—The Poverty of Cortes.*

THAT ever-recurring difficulty—to find a head and hand which should carry into execution good laws,—appears to have been fully present to the minds of the royal councillors; for, in the same letter in which they announced their unanimous opinion to His Majesty respecting the liberty of the Indians, they suggested that a bold and prudent "caballero," a man of good estate (*hacendado*), should be sent as President of the Audiencia. The Conde de Oropesa was named, but he would not accept the office. Afterwards, the Mariscal de Fromesta, and Don Antonio de Mendoza, son of the Marqués de Mondejar, were applied to; but their demands

Dec. 10, 1529.

were so exorbitant, that the Council informed His Majesty that their thoughts were turned to others.*

It is not surprising that men of great name and station in Spain, who fulfilled the requisite conditions of being bold, prudent, and of large estate, should demand extraordinary powers and privileges, before undertaking a charge which no one hitherto had come well out of. Lists have been made of the conquerors and governors in the New World, as of men, all of whose careers were signalized by miserable or disgraceful terminations; and in an age which had Machiavelli's "*Prince*" in its hands, and when politics had begun to be considered scientifically, it was not difficult to know that one of the most lamentable positions in the world is to hold an office of great state and great apparent power, and in reality to be bound by all manner of invisible fetters, being secretly at the mercy of some obscure official people around you or at home.

The difficulty, for the present, of finding a man of weight to preside over the new *Audiencia* was

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* "Coleccion de Muñoz," MS., tom. 78.

obviated by choosing a person who had already filled a similar office, undertaken at a period of like confusion in another part of the Indies. This was Don Sebastian Ramirez de Fuenleal, Bishop of St. Domingo in Hispaniola, who had been sent to that island to be President of an *Audiencia* which had been for some time established there. In this office his success is thus briefly described:—"He gave authority to the administration of justice. The rivalries between the Auditors and the other royal officers ceased. Each one kept within the limits of his office; and in all respects there was quiet."

Don Sebastian Ramirez chosen as President of the *Audiencia*.

The Government of Spain was fortunate in being able to command the services of such a man as Don Sebastian for the presidency of the new *Audiencia* to be sent to Mexico. This body was entirely renewed, as Auditors were sent, not only to replace those who had died on first arriving in the country, but also to supersede the two who had lived to do so much mischief. All the new Auditors were licentiates, and their names were Vasco de Quiroga, Alonzo Maldonado, Francisco de Ceynos, and Juan de Salmerón.

*Audiencia* renewed.

This last-mentioned Auditor was a man of

some experience in the Indies, having been Alcalde Mayor of the province of Castilla del Oro. To each of them was given a large salary —600,000 *maravedis*,*—in order that they might not be tempted to undertake any private enterprise for gain. The Empress wrote to Don Sebastian with her own hand, informing him of his appointment, and mentioning that the new Auditors would call for him at St. Domingo, on their way out to Mexico.

Large salary for Auditors.

This new *Audiencia* had very complicated business awaiting them. The representations which the former one had made against Cortes had been so manifestly unjust, that it was intrusted to these new Auditors to take another *residencia* of Cortes; then they were to take a *residencia* of Nuño de Guzman; they were to settle the dispute between him and the Bishop Protector; they were publicly to reprimand the former Auditors; and we have already seen, from the proceedings of the Great Junta before mentioned, that these new Auditors would have to

Complicated business awaiting these Auditors.

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* Equal, I believe, to 416*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* in English money —a large salary in those days.

execute a very difficult commission with regard to the liberty of the Indians, if anything was to be done in accordance with the important decision already pronounced by that Council.

The order of their entry into Mexico settled.

Amongst other instructions given to them, there is one which suited well with Spanish stateliness, as it settled the form and order in which they were to enter Mexico, the chief seat of their government. The great seal was to be placed in a little casket, borne by a mule covered with velvet; and when they entered the city, the President was to be on the right hand of the seal, and one of the Auditors on the left, the other Auditors going before, according to their rank. They were all to be lodged in the house of the Marquis del Valle. The Marquis himself was allowed at that time to return to New Spain; but he had received orders from the Empress not for the present to enter Mexico, nor even to come within ten leagues of that city, at least, as I conjecture, not until the *audiencia* were finally settled in power. He went back, clothed with the authority of Captain-General; and so far, at least, Cortes was not treated unwisely or ungenerously by the Spanish

Cortes returns to New Spain, July 15, 1530.

Government. He was received with vivid demonstrations of delight by great numbers of the people in New Spain, both Spaniards and Indians. Indeed, they offered to place themselves at his disposal, and to put his enemies in the *Audiencia* to death. They were clamorous in telling him what they had suffered during his absence; but he, with his accustomed prudence, did what he could to soothe them, entirely put aside their offers of vengeance, and even strove to divert them by public games and entertainments.

On the 15th of September, 1530, a few months after the departure from Spain of the Marquis, the new auditors sailed from Seville, and arrived in New Spain at the beginning of the year 1531. The form of their entry into Mexico was somewhat disturbed by the absence of their President, the Bishop of St. Domingo, whom they were not able to bring with them, as they could not succeed in entering the port of St. Domingo, "by reason," as an old chronicler tells us, "of the things of the sea being more doubtful than certain."* This was to be regretted, for graver

The second *Audiencia* arrives at Mexico. 1531.

* "Por ser las cosas de la Mar, mas dudosas, que ciertas."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. v. cap. 9.

reasons than the injury to the pomp of their entrance into Mexico; but the new Auditors, without waiting for their President, commenced their arduous business; and we find, from a letter written to the Emperor some months afterwards, that not a day had passed, not even the festivals of the Church, in which they had not been sitting in council ten or twelve hours together, for the dispatch of business, dealing, as they graphically express it, "with a new land, new kinds of business, and with minds inclined to dangerous innovations, which every day are excited by new thoughts."

The various reforms in the Indies which were projected at Court, and some of which were carried into execution in New Spain by this *Audiencia*, must have told considerably upon the fortunes of Cortes—a man who, if he received much, always spent much; with whom, to use an expression of King Ferdinand's, money never rested. The expenses he incurred in preparing for expeditions in the South Sea were very great, and not remunerative. Whatever may have been the causes, it is a striking fact, that there came a period when the conqueror of Mexico could not

afford to live for more than a month at a time in the great city which he had conquered, devastated, repeopled, and rebuilt. "I have enough to do," he says (in a letter written at Mexico, and dated in the year 1538), "to maintain myself in a village, where I have my wife, without daring to reside in this city, or come into it, as I have not the means to live in it; and if sometimes I come because I cannot help doing so, and remain in it a month, I am obliged to fast for a year."*

Poverty of the greatest resident in New Spain.

Those who care to observe human affairs curiously have often speculated upon the change that would be produced by a very slight knowledge of the future. If men could see, they say, but ten years in advance, the greater part of mankind would not have heart to continue their labours. The farmer would quit his plough, the merchant his merchandize, the scholar his books.

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* "Yo tengo harto que hacer en mantenerme en un aldea donde tengo mi muger, sin osar residir en esta cibdad ni venir á ella por no tener que comer en ella; y si alguna vez vengo porque no puedo escusarlo, si estoy en ella un mes, tengo necesidad de ayunar un año."—*Carta del* MARQUÉS DEL VALLE, *escrita desde Méjico con fecha de* 20 *de Setiembre, de* 1538, *al* PRESIDENTE DEL CONSEJO REAL DE LAS INDIAS. *Doc. Inéd.*, tom. iv. p. 197.

Still, there would remain a few faithful to their pursuits—lovers, fanatics, and benevolent men. But of all those whom ten years' prescience would induce to lay down their work in utter discontent as the future unrolled itself before their wondering eyes, the conqueror, perhaps, would be the man who first would stay his hand. For the results of conquest are among the greatest disappointments in the world. The policy which seems so judicious and so nicely adjusted that it well repays the anxious nights of thought that have been spent upon it, would, even with the small foreknowledge of ten years, be seen to be inconsequent, foolish, and mischievous. The ends which appear so precious that the blood of armies may justly be spilt in the hope of attaining them, would be clearly discerned to be noxious and ludicrous. All the vast crimes which are gilded by motives of policy would be seen in their naked horror; and the most reckless of statesmen or warriors would start back appalled at the sufferings he was about to inflict upon the world for inadequate and futile causes. When, however, the warrior happened to be a fanatic, the future on this earth would not disturb him.

A slight knowledge of the future would paralyse the arm of the conqueror.

He would be equally ready to slaughter his thousands, to devastate provinces, and to ruin, as mostly happens, his own fortunes, whatever the ten years' annals, written prophetically on the wall, might disclose to him.

Cortes, as a statesman and a man of the world, might have shuddered, if he could have foreseen the fate of himself, his companions, and the nations he came to conquer. But, sheathed as he was in the impenetrable armour of fanaticism, he would probably have counted these things as no loss, provided that the True Faith should thereby be proclaimed more widely in the New World. This must be his excuse, and this, no doubt, was his comfort, when he contemplated the sorry end of his labours as regarded himself and his own fortunes.

Later in life, we find him writing to the Emperor in the same strain of complaint as that related above.* The latter days of Cortes bear a strange resemblance to those of Columbus, and,

The latter days of Cortes.

* "Véome viejo, y pobre y empeñado en este reino en mas de veinte mil ducados, sin mas de ciento otros que he gastado de los que traje é me han enviado, que algunos dellos debo tambien, que los han tomado pres-

indeed, to those of Charles the Fifth himself. Men of this great stamp seldom know when to put a limit to their exertions, and to occupy themselves solely in securing the conquests they have made. And, as the nature of things is always against an energetic man, some day or other, especially when he grows weaker and older, adverse circumstances, to his astonishment, triumph over him. Besides, even supposing him to be very prudent, and anxious to undertake nothing which he cannot master, the field for his exertions inevitably widens with success. Instead of a line to pursue, he has a large area to command. Envy meanwhile increases as he becomes more conspicuous. Many men lean upon him when he is known to be strong. His attention is distracted; and even without any deterioration of character, or failing of force, he is destroyed by the large development of new difficulties which grow up around him. As the early history of the Indies teems with commanders who ulti-

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tados para enviarme, y todos corren cambios."—*Carta* [illegible] *Memorial de* HERNAN CORTES *al* EMPERADOR CARLOS V *Valladolid, 3 de Febrero, de* 1544. *Doc. Inéd.*, tom 1 p. 45.

mately prove unfortunate, it is but fair to look into the natural causes of failure which would beset them in any country, but which would be stronger in a newly-discovered country than elsewhere.



# CHAPTER XXI.

*The Expeditions sent out by Cortes to the North of Mexico—Cortes returns to Spain—His grievances and troubles.*

I WILL now endeavour to give very briefly an account of what Cortes did during the ten years which elapsed from the time of his return from Spain to Mexico in 1530 to that of his finally returning in 1540 to the mother country, where he spent the remainder of his days.

Though Cortes could not afford to live in the city of Mexico, he did afford, and was obliged to afford, the disbursement of the necessary expenses for fitting out expeditions to make discovery in what was called the Sea of the South. I say, "he was obliged to afford," because the Emperor

had imposed upon him the condition of endeavouring to make these discoveries.

The man, whose name in after times was most noted for discovery in those regions, was a certain Franciscan monk, Marcos of Nice, who in a missionary enterprise made great discoveries, as he said, to the north of Mexico. He returned, giving a wonderful account of what he called "the seven cities of Sybola," and saying how, "the farther you went northwards (*i. e.* towards the country now known as the gold region of California), the more peopled the country was, and the more rich with gold and turquoises." Cortes, however, had long before commenced these expeditions to the north of Mexico, sending out captain after captain to make discoveries, all of whom were utterly unsuccessful. Cortes then resolved to go himself; but neither was he more successful, as regards the results of discovery, than his captains had been. Certainly, he discovered California; but he left that country, little conjecturing the riches which he had probably trodden under foot. It was on that occasion that his second wife wrote him a most touching letter, begging him to return

to his Marquisate in Mexico, to think of his boys and girls, and no longer to tempt fortune, but to content himself with the heroic actions he had already performed, and with his world-wide fame.

Cortes returns to Mexico from California.

Cortes accordingly returned to Mexico, and was received with great joy by the authorities and by all the other inhabitants; for at that time every Spaniard was in great terror lest the native Indians should take advantage of the absence of Cortes to revolt.

I cannot help remarking that this tenderness on the part of the second wife of Cortes, and which probably induced him to hasten his return, gives some indication, of what certainly was the case, that in private and domestic life he was very loveable. He was no longer attractive from the beauty of his person. In fact, ever since his return from Honduras, in which expedition he had suffered much hardship and privation, and before his marriage with his second wife, he had become a sickly diseased man. Indeed he was so much altered that many people did not know him again.*

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* "E aun muchos le desconosçian." — OVIEDO, lib. xxxiii. cap. 49.

He was now exceedingly fat and swollen, and it was in vain that he endeavoured to conceal the ravages of premature old age by dyeing his grey beard black.

With almost every great man there is a time of culmination, after which there is mostly disaster and decadence. This was pre-eminently the case with Cortes. His fortunes culminated on the day when he took Mexico. Afterwards he had but a sorry life of it. As Bernal Diaz says, "Everything turned to thorns with him." Not that this daunted him; for even after his return from California, he equipped and sent out another great expedition to make discovery in the Sea of the South. This, too, was unsuccessful.

Neither in what may be considered his private undertakings was his career, after the taking of Mexico, the least more prosperous. He was in terrible feud with the King's Officers upon a point of much nicety connected with his private estate. He contended that the Emperor had intended to give him all the Indians in the Townships which the Emperor had assigned to him;

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* "Todo le tornó en Espinas."

and he reckoned his Indians by the heads of families. The King's Officers, on the other hand, contended that the number of Indians assigned to the Marquis was to be reckoned according to age. They included in their reckoning every adult male in a household, whether master, servant, son or slave. Thus they sometimes counted as many as fifteen in a household where Cortes had only counted one.

Then, again, Cortes was in feud with the person of highest authority in New Spain. The Spanish Government had sent, in 1535, a Viceroy to New Spain, namely, Don Antonio de Mendoza, a man of great ability and prudence, but who could not live at peace with Cortes; and many and grievous were the disputes between the Viceroy and the Captain General about these expeditions to the Sea of the South, in which, by the way, Cortes had expended no less a sum than 300,000 pesos.

Impoverished in means, vexed with law-suits, annoyed with contentions against Royal Officers, Cortes led a miserable life in Mexico. Imagining that from his former reception at the Court of Spain, his presence there would enable him to

prevail over all his difficulties, he resolved to return to Spain to fight his battles there. Accordingly, in the year 1540, he quitted Mexico for that purpose, little imagining that he was leaving for ever the scene of his conquest.

Quits Mexico for Spain, 1540.

The Empress Donna Isabella died in the year 1539; and Cortes and all his suite were in deep mourning for Her Majesty when they arrived at court. Bernal Diaz was also in mourning, as also Fernando Pizarro, and other persons who had come from Peru and New Spain upon business. Probably their suits of mourning were in accord with their discontented countenances, and they were generally called "the Mourning Indians of Peru."*

The Marquis accompanied the Emperor in his expedition to Algeria (A.D. 1541); and, as it was justly said, lost more in that unfortunate expedition than the Emperor himself; for, being shipwrecked, Cortes lost the valuable jewels, chiefly emeralds, which he carried with him, and which formed no inconsiderable part of his fortune.

But his mortification in that enterprise was

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* "Los Indianos Peruleros Enlutados."

greater than his pecuniary loss. He, then the greatest Captain of his age, was not even summoned to the Council of War. It was in vain that he offered to retrieve the fortunes of the Emperor in that disastrous campaign, and pledged himself to take Algiers if he might only have the command of the troops who were there, without any reinforcements. The soldiers were willing to act with him, but the sailors were not; and the people in authority would not listen to him, nay even, as some say, mocked at his pretensions. The enterprise was abandoned, and the Moors were left to be, by their piratical exploits, a terror and an injury to Europe for many generations.*

The poets say that "Care sits behind a man and follows him wherever he goes." So does ill-success; and henceforward the life of Cortes was almost invariably unsuccessful. There is an anecdote told of him (resting upon no higher authority than that of Voltaire) which, though evidently untrue, tells in a mythical way the reception which Cortes met with at the Spanish Court; and his feelings as regards that reception.

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* See Sandoval, "Hist. de Carlos V.," lib. xxv. cap. 12.

One day he broke through the crowd which surrounded the carriage of the Emperor and jumped on the step.

"Who are you?" said the Emperor in astonishment.

"I am a man," replied Cortes fiercely, "who has given you more provinces than your ancestors have left you cities."

Quitting fiction, however, and returning to fact, there is a letter extant addressed by Cortes to the Emperor Charles the Fifth which conveys more forcibly than even a large extent of narrative could do, the troubles, vexations, and disappointments which Cortes had to endure at this latter period of his life, and his own feelings with regard to them. It is one of the most touching letters ever written by a subject to a sovereign. I will here translate some of it, greatly condensing those parts of the letter which relate to the business in hand, and which would be as wearisome to the reader to read, as they were to the writer to write; for doubtless, it was not the first time, by many times, that Cortes had set down the same grievance in writing.

The letter bears date Valladolid; the 3rd of February, 1544. It begins thus:—

The letter of Cortes to the Emperor.

"Sacred Cesarian Catholic Majesty:—I thought that having laboured in my youth, it would so profit me that in my old age I might have ease and rest; and now it is forty years that I have been occupied in not sleeping, in eating ill, and sometimes eating neither well nor ill, in bearing armour, in placing my person in danger, in spending my estate and my life, all in the service of God, bringing sheep into his sheepfold—which were very remote from our hemisphere, unknown, and whose names are not written in our writings—also increasing and making broad the name and patrimony of my King—gaining for him, and bringing under his yoke and Royal sceptre, many and very great kingdoms of many barbarous nations, all won by my own person, and at my own expense; without being assisted in anything, on the contrary, being much hindered by many jealous and envious persons who, like leeches, have been filled to bursting with my blood." *

He then proceeds to say that for the part which God has had in his labours and watchings,

* "Sin ser ayudado de cosa alguna, antes muy estorbado por muchos émulos é invidiosos que como sanguijuelas han rebentado de hartos de mi sangre."

he is sufficiently paid, because it was His work; and it was not without a reason that Providence was pleased that so great a work should be accomplished by so weak a medium, in order that it might be seen that to God alone the good work must be attributed.

Cortes then says that for what he has done for the King, he has always been satisfied with the remuneration he has received. The King has been grateful to him, has honoured him, and has rewarded him; and, he adds, that His Majesty knows that the rewards and honours which the Emperor offered were, in the opinion of Cortes, so far greater than his merits, that he refused to receive them.

What, however, His Majesty did mean him to receive, he has not received. That which His Majesty has given has been so completely without fruit, that it would have been better for Cortes not to have had it, but that he should have taken care of his private estate, and not spent the fruit of *that* in defending himself against "the Fiscal of Your Majesty, which defence has been, and is, a more difficult undertaking than to win the land of the enemy."

He then implores His Majesty that he will be pleased to render clear the goodwill which he had shown to reward him. "I see myself," he exclaims, "old and poor and indebted." Not only have I no repose in my old age, but I foresee labour and trouble until my death." And he adds, "Please God that the mischief may not go beyond death; but may finish with the body, and not exist for ever, since whosoever has such toil in defending his bodily estate, cannot avoid injuring his soul."

All that he asks is that his appeal may be heard: that members of the King's Council be added to the Council of the Indies; and that the cause may be determined, and judgment given, without any further delay. "For otherwise I must leave it and lose it, and must return to my home as I am no longer of the age to go about to hostelries; but should withdraw myself to make my account clear with God, since it is a large one that I have,*

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* Here the words of the celebrated chronicler, Menstrelet, may well be appended:—"It is of some moment when a king or great prince dies, who may, perhaps, have caused the deaths of numbers of human creatures like themselves; for I believe that in the other world

and little life is left to me to discharge my conscience; and it will be better for me to lose my estate than my soul." * He concludes by saying, that "He is of Your Catholic Majesty the very humble servant and vassal, who kisses your very royal feet and hands—the Marques del Valle."

The first feeling of every reader of this letter must be regret that so great a monarch as Charles

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they will have enough to do, more especially respecting this circumstance, that a poor man, with six or seven small children, not worth twenty sols in the world, shall be taxed from ten to twenty sols, and when the collector shall come to receive the tax, finding the man worth nothing, and without means of raising the money, he commits him to prison, where he languishes out his days. Now I would like to have shown any written law for this injustice; but no one will attempt so to do, because everyone is eager to push himself forward in this world. May God assist the poor people!" [The account which Cortes gives related more to slaughter than to taxation, and therefore was more than regal in its seriousness and extent.]

* "Porque no tengo ya edad para andar por mesones, sino para recojerme á aclarar mi cuenta con Dios, pues la tengo larga, y poco vida para dar los descargos, y será mejor dejar perder la hacienda quel ánima,"—*Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España*, tom. 1, Madrid, 1842.

the Fifth should have given occasion for any such letter to be written to him. But this feeling is one that experience will not justify. Kings and Kaisers and the greatest men are generally found impotent against the "Fiscal" of their respective countries. There is always some small-minded clerk to find or make difficulties, and to raise objections. And this noxious individual thinks he is doing great service to the state while he chiefly dwells upon what ought to be "unconsidered trifles." He is the worm who gnaws at the greatness of states, discouraging noble enterprise, and worrying the heart out of those who would do something for the world. He has often more to do with the downfall of nations than historians, who have not been versed in affairs, can readily imagine.

If it had not been for these fiscal troubles, and for the sense of injury which rankled in his mind, the latter days of Cortes were not outwardly unhappy. He passed them in a manner which might have satisfied almost any other man but the restless and impatient conqueror. Men of letters cultivated his society; and the meetings of an Academy were held at his house. Peter

de Novarra published in 1547 forty Moral Dialogues, partly the result of conversations held at the house of Cortes.* I cannot agree with those who think that Cortes was a learned man. In one of his letters I find him telling the Emperor when one of his captains had rebelled against him that people would say it was *pena pecati*, on account of the false idea they had of his conduct to Velasquez. This is not the usual way in which the words "*pœna peccati*" are spelt. I have no doubt that Cortes delighted in the society of learned men as the first Napoleon did in that of scientific men; but converse with learned men could not occupy the mind or heart of either of these restless conquerors. Cortes wished to return to Mexico; but all the influence of his great connections could not procure leave from the Emperor for Cortes to return until certain pending suits were settled; and they never were settled during the lifetime of Cortes.

In addition to these vexations he had a domestic trouble which doubtless caused him much

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* Mr. Ticknor says:—"I find nothing in these to illustrate the character of Cortes, except the fact that such meetings were held at his house."

mortification. His daughter Donna Maria was engaged to one of the greatest nobles in Spain; but ultimately the young man refused to fulfil the engagement. Some say that this caused the death of Cortes. But this is not so. He was broken alike in health and in spirits, by reason of the many reverses he had met with in these his latter days.

'We live, to a great measure, upon success; and there is no knowing the agony that an unvarying course of ill-success causes to a sanguine and powerful mind which feels that, if only such and such small obstacles were removed out of its way, it could again shine forth with all its pristine force and brightness.'

To meet this rejected daughter, who was coming from New Spain, Cortes went to Seville. There he was taken ill, and, being molested by the importunity of many persons who came to see him on business, he retired to a small village, about half a league from Seville, called Castilleja de la Cuesta. He also sought retirement for the purpose, as Bernal Diaz says, of making his will*

* His will, however, is dated Seville.

and preparing his soul for death. "And when he had settled his worldly affairs, our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to take him from this troublesome world." He died on the 2nd of December, 1547, being then sixty-two years of age.

Cortes was buried with much pomp in the private chapel of the Dukes of Medina Sidonia in the San Franciscan monastery of Seville. Afterwards his remains were taken to New Spain and interred at Tezcuco.

The legitimate children that he left were Don Martin, Donna Maria, who was to have been married to Don Perez Osorio, but who afterwards married the Conde of Luna de Leon; Donna Juana, Donna Catalina and Donna Leonor. He also left two sons and three daughters illegitimate. In his will he leaves money to found a hospital, a college and a nunnery. The marquis, as his chaplain tells us, was always a great almsgiver. He would even run into debt to give alms to poor people; and, on his death-bed, he inculcated the sacred duty of almsgiving upon his heir, whom he loved, and who loved him, Don Martin Cortes.

The following extract from the will of Cortes

shows how anxious he was to make a restitution in those cases wherein he had acted, or might have acted, unjustly.

"Item. Because doubts have arisen with respect to those natives of New Spain who have been made slaves, as well those of war as of ransom, namely, whether they can be held with a sufficiently good conscience or not, and up to this time the question is not settled, I desire that it should be ascertained what in this matter I ought not to have done, and that for the discharge of conscience as regards these slaves, that should be done which ought to be done in respect of those which I hold. And I charge upon my son and heir Don Martin, and upon his successors, that they should use all diligence for the discharge of my conscience and theirs in this matter."

He then desires that, with regard to all those lands which he has taken for gardens, vineyards, cotton-grounds and other purposes, it should be ascertained whether they were the property of the natives; and, if so, restitution and compensation should be made to the real owners.

He also desires that the personal services which he has received from his vassals, in addition

to their tribute, should be ascertained; and, as there are doubts whether these personal services ought to have been rendered to him, it should be seen whether any of them were rendered unjustly; and if so, full payment and restitution should be made.

It remains that a general and a just estimate should be made of the actions of this renowned warrior. It has been admitted that the enterprises undertaken by Cortes, subsequently to that of the conquest of Mexico, were, for the most part, unsuccessful. This statement, however, must be understood with a certain limitation. Cortes was a great discoverer as well as a great conqueror. But some of his most important discoveries, such as that of Guatemala and New Galicia, were inevitably worked out by the captains whom he sent forth; and it is much to be noticed that this discovery by deputy, whether made on the instance and at the expense of the King of Spain, or of his Governors in the Indies, or of private individuals, was seldom or ever beneficial to the suggesters and providers of the expedition who stayed at home. Conquest and discovery in the

New World were not things that could be done by deputy—that is, at least, with any advantage to the deputing persons. This impressed an appearance of failure upon their doings, although in many instances, and especially in that of Cortes, the devising of the enterprise was the result of much boldness, skill, ingenuity and knowledge.

It has been necessary to bring before the reader the efforts of Cortes in the direction of new discovery and of new conquest, otherwise his life might almost seem to have been barren of enterprise and to have been an active life only during that year in which he conquered Mexico. But he was always busy in great enterprises. Besides those that have been recorded here in some detail, he sent ships to discover the Spice Islands, to find out a new way to China, and to ascertain whether there was any communication by sea between the Atlantic and the Pacific. When Pizarro was in great straits in Peru, Cortes did not fail to send assistance to his brother conqueror.*

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* Cortes sent Rodrigo de Grijalva from new Spain in a ship of his own, with a large supply of arms, armour, and clothing.

Men who afterwards distinguished themselves much in conquest and in government had been the lieutenants of Cortes; and, in short, at whatever point you take up the history of the Indies, during the life of the great Marquis, you generally find that he was in some way or other concerned in what was going on. In truth the lives of Las Casas, Cortes and Pizarro, if told in full detail, would almost exhaust the history of America of that period. I have not given the life of Cortes in this detail, because I know that men's memories and their patience of details are very limited things, and that to recount a number of abortive enterprises, or enterprises that were hereafter carried into fulfilment by other discoverers and conquerors, would only perplex the reader and lead him away from the contemplation of the main events in the life of Cortes.

Still, in justice to this great man, it must not be forgotten that his life was full to the brim of anxious labour; and that the conquest of Mexico was but one, though the most notable, of the many enterprises which he undertook. Whether he was ill or well, I have good reason for thinking that no day passed in the life of Cortes which was

not largely occupied in designing great things, and in making preparations to fulfil these great designs.

Amongst all modern histories I think the Mexican, if it were thoroughly known to the world, would be considered to be one of the most interesting. If we take an individual Mexican of the higher and more cultivated class at the time of the conquest, he was perhaps one of the most extraordinary beings that the world has ever seen. He was full of knowledge; he was accomplished in art. Mere cleverness and skill in the arts of living had been carried to the highest extent by his people. He was even a most refined person. The prayers of the Mexicans are among the most beautiful prayers, as far as we know, that have ever been offered up by man. At the same time this cultivated, this accomplished, this pious man was the victim of as degrading a superstition as ever enslaved and brutalized mankind. To justify the assertion made above as to the beauty of the Mexican prayers, an assertion which may naturally appear to be one requiring some proof, I will subjoin the prayer of a Mexican priest, called a satrap, after hearing the confession of a penitent.

"Our Lord most gracious, the defender and favourer of all; you have just heard the confession of this poor sinner, in which he has made known in your presence his rottenness and filthiness." The satrap then went on to say, in words which I shall abridge, that the sinner might have concealed some of his sins, in which case dire will be his punishment; but perchance he has spoken the whole truth, and now feels "dolour and discontent" for all that is past, and firm resolve never to sin more. Then the satrap* said, "I speak in presence of your Majesty, who knowest all things, and knowest that this poor wretch did not sin with entire liberty of free will, but was helped and inclined to it by the natural condition

Mexican prayer after confession.

Mexican prayers after confession.

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* I keep the word "satrap," as it is used in the original, and may give a clue to the Mexican word which it represents. "Satrap," in the middle ages, had a signification it has since lost. "Chartam Æthelredi Regis Angl. post Duces subscribunt aliquot viri nobiles, cum hoc titulo, *Satrapa Regis.* Quæ appellatio eadem est forte quæ *Ministri.* Vide in hac voce. (S. Bernardus *de Consid.* lib. iv. Quid illud sit dicam, et non proderit. Cur? quia non placebit Satrapis, plus majestati quam veritati faventibus.")—Ducange, *Gloss.* "Satrapa."

of the sign under which he was born. And since it is so, O most gracious Lord, defender and favourer of all men, even if this poor man has grievously offended against you, peradventure will you not cause your anger and your indignation to depart from him?" Continuing in this strain, the satrap besought pardon and remission of sins, a thing which descends from heaven as clearest and purest water," with which "your Majesty," he said, "washes away and purifies all the stains and filthiness which sins cause in the soul" (*todas las mancillas, y suciedades, que los pecados causan en el ánima*).

The satrap addressed the penitent, and told him that he had come to a place of much danger and labour and dread, where there is a ravine from which no one who had once fallen in could make his escape; also, he had come to a place where snares and nets are set one with another, and one over against another. All this is said metaphorically of the world and of sin. The satrap proceeded to speak of the judgment to come in another world, and of the lake of miseries and intolerable torments. "But now, here you are," he said to the penitent, "and the time is arrived

in which you have had pity on yourself to speak with our Lord, who sees the secrets of hearts." And then the satrap told the penitent there was a new birth for him, but he must look to his ways well, and see that he sinned no more. Finally, he must cleanse his house * and himself, and seek a slave to sacrifice before God (there is the blot on the whole proceeding), and he must work a year or more in the house of God, and undergo penitential exercises, piercing his tongue for the injurious words it had uttered; and he must give in charity even to the depriving of himself of sustenance: "for look," said the satrap, speaking of the poor, "their flesh is as thy flesh, and they are men as thou art, especially the sick, for they are the image of God. There is no more to say

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* In reference to this cleansing of the house, the exhortation is as follows :—"Carefully cleanse and preserve thy house, and thou wilt often meet that most gracious youth who ever goes through our houses, and through our districts, comforting and recreating, and works, seeking his friends to console them, and be consoled with them." This is said entirely in a spiritual sense, for the prayer has just declared that God is "invisible and impalpable." — Aglio, *Antiquities of Mexico*. Kingsborough's *Collection*, vol. v. p. 370.

to thee; go in peace; and I pray God that he may help thee to perform that which thou art bound to do, for he is gracious to all men."*

There is another prayer which also is one that must raise our opinion of the thoughtfulness of the Mexicans in the construction of their prayers. It is the prayer of a king, or governor, upon his election, in which, after celebrating the greatness of God (this also is addressed to Tezcatlipuk), and debasing himself before Him, saying that he deserves blindness of his eyes and crushing of his body (a confession which many rulers might make after they have had the government), he goes on to say, that he it is who requires to be governed, and that the Lord must know many to whom he could confide this charge of government; but since "you are determined," he says, "to put me forward as an object of scandal and laughter for the world, let your will be done. Peradventure,"

Mexican prayer of a new king.

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* "Mira que su carne és como la tuya, y que son hombres como tu; mayormente á los enfermos porque son imágen de Dios. No hay mas que te decir; vete en paz, y ruego á Dios que te ayude á cumplir lo que eres obligado á hacer, pues que el favorece á todos."—KINGSBOROUGH'S *Collection*, vol. v. p. 371.

he exclaims, "you do not know who I am. After that you know what person I am, you will seek another, depriving me of the government, being weary of enduring me. Perchance," he adds, "it is a dream, or as when one rises from his bed in his sleep, this thing which has happened to me." The prayer then proceeds, as the prayer of a ruler naturally would do, against war and against pestilence, and speaks of former rulers, and, if I understand it rightly, of their joys and privileges in heaven; and then he comes to speak of his own inferiority, how he has no possibility of ruling himself, how he is in darkness, how he is a heap of refuse in a corner. "Be gracious, therefore, O Lord," he exclaims, "and give me a little light, if it be no more than so much as a glow-worm, which moves by night, throws out from itself, that I may find my way in this dream and this sleep of life, which lasts as a day, where there are many occasions for stumbling, and many things to give occasion for laughter, and other things that are as a rugged road, which have to be passed by leaping."*

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* "Tened por bien, Señor, de me dar un poquito de

Mexican prayer of a new king.

He concludes by saying, "Our Lord most gracious, you have made me sit in your seat and be your instrument of voice (*vuestra flauta*)* without any desert of my own;" and afterwards he adds, "Although I am a poor creature, I wish to say that unworthily I am your image, and represent your person, and the words which I shall speak have to be held as your words, and my countenance to be esteemed as your countenance, and my hearing as your hearing, and the punishments that I shall ordain have to be considered as if you ordained them; wherefore, I pray you, put within me your spirit and your words, that all may obey, and that none may be able to contradict."†

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lumbre, aunque no sea mas de quanto echa de si una lucerna que anda de noche, para ir en este sueño y en esta vida dormida que dura como espacio de un dia, donde hay muchas cosas en que tropezar, y muchas cosas en que dar ocasion de reir; y otras cosas que son como camino fragoso, que se han de pasar saltando."—KINGSBOROUGH'S *Coll.*, vol. v. p. 379.

* The force of this expression will be understood when an account is given of Tezcatlipuk's festival, in which a flute was sounded at certain intervals.

† A doubt will occur to many minds as to how these

After reading the above, the reader must feel sympathy with the Mexican; but he cannot also help feeling sympathy with his great conqueror, who had entered the hideous temples of Mexico and had seen piled up there the skulls of one hundred and thirty-six thousand victims, and who was resolved to introduce Christianity in the place of this most hideous and degrading superstition.

Let us not part from Cortes while thinking of him only as an unsuccessful man, immersed in lawsuits, made little of by the rulers of Spain,

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long prayers were retained in the memory of the Mexicans, whose means of writing with exactitude were, comparatively speaking, limited. The same doubt occurred to the celebrated Acosta three hundred years ago, and he expressed it to one who was able to satisfy him. In the original manuscript of Juan de Tovar, possessed by Sir Thomas Phillips, Bart., of Middle Hill, the letter of Acosta and the answer of Tovar are given. "Pero, para conservarlos por las mismas palabras, que los dixeron sus oradores y poetas, avya cada dia exercicio dello, en los colegios de los mozos principales, que avyan de ser sucesores á estos, y con la contínua repeticion, se les quedava en la memoria, sin discrepar palabra, tomando las oraciones mas famosas, que en cada tiempo se hazian por método, para imponer á los mozos, que avyan de ser retóricos, y de esta suerte se conser-

and in the decadence of his powers and his hopes; but as the mighty conqueror of one of the most compact and well-ordered barbaric nations of the world—a conqueror who with a few hundreds of his fellow countrymen, not all of them his partizans, overcame hundreds of thousands of fanatic and resolute men fighting against him with immense resources, and with a resolution nearly equal to his own. Let us give him the benefit of his sincere belief in Christianity, and his determination to substitute that beneficent religion for the hideous and cruel superstition of the people he was resolved to conquer. And let us echo the wish of that good common soldier, Bernal Diaz, who, though having his grievances against Cortes, as all the other *Conquistadores* thought they had, could yet, after watching every turn in the fortunes of the great Marquis, and knowing almost

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varon muchos parlamentos, sin discrepar palabra, de gente en gente, hasta que vinieron los Españoles, que en nostra letra escrivieron muchas oraciones, y cantares, que yo vi, y assí se han conservado. Y con esto queda respondido á la última pregunta, de 'Cómo era possible tener estos memoria de las palabras,' etc."—JUAN DE TOVAR, *Historia de los Indios Mexicanos*, MS.

every sin that he had committed, write most tenderly of the great captain whose plume he had so often followed to victory.

After saying that subsequently to the conquest of Mexico Cortes had not had good fortune either in his Californian or his Honduras expeditions, or indeed in anything else he had undertaken, Bernal Diaz adds, "Perhaps it was that he might have felicity in heaven. And I believe it was so, for he was an honourable cavalier, and a devoted worshipper of the Virgin, the Apostle St. Peter, and other Saints. May God pardon his sins, and mine too, and give me a righteous ending, which things are of more concern than the conquests and victories that we had over the Indians."

THE END.

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